Soviet Literature

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Soviet Literature

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BORIS CHIRSKOV

THF VICTORS

War Drama in 4 acts

CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY:

Colonel-General KIRILL STEPANOVICH MURAVYEV—Commander of the Front.
Colonel-General VLADIMIR VIKENTYEVICH VINOGRADOV—former Commander, later Chief of Staff of the Front.
Lieutenant-General PYOTR MIKHAILOVICH KRIVENKO—Commander of the 21st Army.
Lieutenant-General Engineer Corps IVAN ANISIMOVICH PANTELEYEV—Chief of Fortified Zone, later Commander of the 21st Army.
LAVROV—Secretary of Regional Committee, later member of the Military Council.
LIZA, Muravyev's wife—Medical Officer of the 105th Division.
"MINUTKA"—Muravyev's chauffeur.
Lieutenant FYODOROV.
STEPAN, a soldier.
Junior Sergeant SHURA FEDULOVA—Traffic Regulator, later telephonist at Panteleyev's H. Q.
Colonel SERGEYEV—Chief of the Operations Department of the Front.
Major-General—Chief of Intelligence Department of the Front.
Lieutenant-General—Chief of Artillery of the Front.
Major-General STUDENTSOV—Commander of the 7th Army.
Colonel VORONKOV—Commander of the 105th Division.
Colonel VLADIMIR PETROVICH—Chief of Staff of the 7th Army.
1st German prisoner, a major attached to Staff of General von Klaus.
Cavalry General.
Commanders of the Reserve Army, adjutants, officers, waitresses, commandant of H. Q. of the 7th Army, 2nd German prisoner—sapper, soldiers.
The scene is laid "on one of the southern fronts" during the autumn and winter of 1942-43.

ACT I

SCENE I

Night.

A deep red glow reveals the distant steppe horizon. Muffled cannonade, the restless beams o searchlights finger the night sky. To the left and right of the stage a road junction resting on a smal bridge. To the right, in the foreground, a roadside ditch on the slopes of which Stepan is fanning camp fire. A little higher, in the pool of light cast by the fire, a rather weird-looking group. A lieu tenant strangely oblivious to his surroundings sits with head bent morosely staring down at th ground; his shabby greatcoat is thrown over his shoulders, a bloodstained bandage is visible beneat his cap. At his feet two soldiers, gripping their rifles, are sleeping, dead to the world.

To the left on the road—a confusion of nocturnal noises—motors starting up, shots. . . I the background where a bend in the road is observed the headlights of cars flash and fade as they spee into the distanee. Gradually there comes into view a disorderly stream of lorries abruptly brough to a standstill by an unexpected obstacle.

A female shriek is drowned in the din of motor engines and the hum of voices. "Stop, you de vil, can't you see where you're going!" "Another jam!" "What's the matter?" "Bridge blown up! "No, it's a lorry." "Vanka, Vanka!" "Why bother with it, ditch the thing." "You just try it, an see what happens to you. . ." "Va-anka. . . ."

The dark figures of men retreating move along the bed of the ditch, skirting the road. One o them stops in his tracks and for a while silently stares at the fire in indecision and surprise.

PASSING SOLDIER (*in low voice*): Say, buddy . . . you're quartered here?

STEPAN (*gruffly*): Hop it, get a move on. We're not your sort. You're coming down the line. We're going up.

(*Suddenly the headlights of one of the rear lorries illuminates the lone figure of a gir regulating the traffic. Firmly gripping he tommy gun, she bars the way.*)

TRAFFIC GIRL (*in ringing voice*): I can' let you through. . . I have strict orders. . You cannot pass without a permit!

The headlights are switched off. A brief silence.)

PASSING SOLDIER: Now don't lose your emper. Keep your hair on. We're no worse han the rest. Why, hell's loose out there.

STEPAN: Never seen anybody so scared f hell before! (*Going about his chores*) Where re you running to, you fool?

PASSING SOLDIER (*uneasy in the dark-ess*): Vassya, hold on! (*To Stepan*) They say he town isn't far off, maybe we'll hold hem there.

STEPAN: The likes of you hold them. . . Mind the Germans don't catch you; they're going your way.

A fresh clamour, gathering volume, breaks ut on the road. Muffled voices of figures in he foreground. "Is she mad?" "Do you real-ze that the Germans are behind us?" "They've roken through," in a panicky falsetto, "Calm lown, calm down." "Switch on the headlights." The lights go up. A dazed major steps out from the crowd.)

MAJOR: Now get this straight, you fool: ll headquarters have already withdrawn, we're the last, so there's nobody to issue ermits!

TRAFFIC GIRL: I shan't let you pass. . . rders are orders. . . I'll shoot if need be.

MAJOR (*stamping his feet*): You whipper-napper, how dare you talk to an officer ke that! Hand over your tommy gun! (*To his chauffeur*): Start up the car!

(*The motors start to hum. . . The glare of eadlights flood the road. . .*)

TRAFFIC GIRL (*in tears*): Don't, don't oys. I shan't let you pass, I'm telling you. 'll have to shoot!

PASSING SOLDIER: Will she slug, or ot? (*Excitedly to Stepan*) My god, she's oing to let 'em have it.

TRAFFIC GIRL (*desperately*): Orders. I'm oing to fire. (*She fires a burst into the air.*)

(The crowd is taken aback. Somewhere from he rear comes the panicky cry "Tommy gun-ners!" Simultaneously from the right a white eam of light sweeps over the crowd. Cries f "tanks!" The roar of many motors and a car merges, knocking down a sign post. Suddenly he lieutenant straightens himself.)

LIEUTENANT (*infuriated*): Stop! Any one who moves is a dead man. Running away, ou swine, when others are throwing them-elves under tanks. Look, (*in a rage pointing o the sleeping men*) that's all that's left. . . Back! Before I shoot down the lot of you!

(To the right a jeep drives noiselessly onto he bridge. The command "Attention!" rings ut. General Krivenko stands up in the jeep. ilence. An adjutant and two tommy gunners ump off from the back seat of the moving eep.)

KRIVENKO (*sternly addressing the traffic irl*): Well?

TRAFFIC GIRL (*in an alert unnatural oice*): Comrade General . . . (*Sobs*) I'm the nly one left at Command Post Num-er 103 . . . (*Covers her face and bursts into ears*) There's nobody to relieve me, and he telephone's no longer working. . . I ad my orders and I fired . . . even though e is an officer. . . .

KRIVENKO (*slowly surveys the crowd, the overturned signpost with the inscription: "Traffic officer's signal is law!" Brusquely thrusting his hand under his greatcoat to grip his holster, Krivenko jumps out of the car and strides up to the major. . . Dead silence*): Take a shovel, lift that signpost and dig it in firmly. D'you hear me?

MAJOR (*confused*): Yes, yes. . . But where am I to find a shovel?

KRIVENKO (*to his adjutant*): He's no officer. Rip off his epaulettes and enlist him in the unit you will now form here on the spot. Cordon off the area and detain all cars, with the exception of ambulances and special messengers.

ADJUTANT (*gives the order*): Back to your cars.

KRIVENKO (*to the traffic girl*): What's your name?

TRAFFIC GIRL: Junior Sergeant Shura Fedulova.

KRIVENKO (*to the adjutant*): Make a note of that. (*Saluting, in a grave voice*) Thank you, junior sergeant. You say you have a telephone?

TRAFFIC GIRL: Yes, Comrade General . . . over there.

KRIVENKO (*walking up to his adjutant*): Wait a moment, we're not in our section. Let's try and contact 7th Army Headquarters.

TRAFFIC GIRL (*her tear-stained face radiant*): Comrade General, permit me to resume duty.

KRIVENKO: Go ahead! (*Catches sight of the lieutenant and walks up to him.*)

TRAFFIC GIRL (*after wiping her cheeks pulls out her signal flags*): Now. . . What's all this mess . . . clear the road! Those who have permits line up.

KRIVENKO (*brusquely*): What are you doing here?

LIEUTENANT: I'm looking for my regiment, Comrade General.

KRIVENKO: And where's the unit under your command?

LIEUTENANT: Wiped out while defending one of the heights.

KRIVENKO (*harshly*): And you?

LIEUTENANT: At the appointed hour, together with three of my men, broke through encirclement. (*Pulls out creased paper, gruffly*) I have a written order.

KRIVENKO (*brushing aside the paper*): Enemy losses?

LIEUTENANT: Fourteen tanks knocked out or burnt. Not sure of the exact number of men wiped out. . . We were fighting in the dark.

KRIVENKO: Fine. (*Looks at the sleeping men and in a low voice simply*): They're dead beat. . . Where's the third?

STEPAN (*climbing out of the ditch*): Here, Lieutenant-General. I've been trying to get a fire going. I'm in charge of the platoon's grub.

KRIVENKO: It seems to me we've met before. (*Looks closely at Stepan*): No, I can't recall where. You look like an old soldier to me.

STEPAN: Yes, Comrade General, I've fought from the very frontier and back.

KRIVENKO (*flashes a look at him*): Back?

ADJUTANT *(looking out of the telephone booth)*: I've contacted Headquarters.

KRIVENKO: So, so "back". . . Yes, it's high time, my friend, to be facing the other way. *(Rapidly makes for the booth.)*

(The lieutenant continues to stand immovable like a graven image. Muffled cannonade. The traffic girl is examining permits. The adjutant hands the receiver to Krivenko. Lights up the booth with a small pocket torch.)

KRIVENKO *(speaking into the 'phone)*: This is Krivenko, commander of the 21st Army, speaking. Put me in touch with the commander of the 7th Army. . . *(While waiting takes the torch from the adjutant)* Give them a hand out there.

(The adjutant leaves. Liza appears on the road, elbows her way through the crowd to the traffic girl.)

LIZA: Let me pass. . . You've heard me, let me pass. What a disgrace. It hurts to look you in the face!

CHAUFFEUR: What about yourself. You seem to be in a mighty hurry.

LIZA *(shows her permit to the traffic girl)*: Shut up. I'm accompanying heavily wounded and not runaways. Men are bleeding to death and you?. . .

TRAFFIC GIRL: Just a minute, Major. *(Leaves, voice back stage)* Back that car, clear the road. . . Back, I say. . . .

KRIVENKO *(speaking into the mouthpiece)*: Studentsov, hello! It's me alright. What are you up to, you old war horse—your army is way behind your H. Q. You should see what's doing along your line—why, things are in a holy mess. . . *(Closes the door of the telephone booth.)*

PASSING SOLDIER *(watching)*: So that's what we've come to—an army stopped by a slip of a girl.

STEPAN *(sternly)*: Not by a girl but by Conscience. Russians, Russians!. . They ought to be shot, but then again. . . .

PASSING SOLDIER: D'you think the Jerries are better? . . . *(tonelessly)* The way they sweep down, like a mowing machine, you just can't get a grip on them. . . *(bitterly)* Damn them, I'd spit in their eyes, I would, if only I could lay my hands on them.

STEPAN *(smiling)*: So . . . you're beginning to learn a thing or two, eh? . . *(Shakes his head)* Look at our men, they're wor out, covered with mud and dust, and you' think they're done for. But nothing of th sort. Their soul is not killed yet. And, whe it comes to their self-respect—lay off! A they want is a wall to lean against. They'v had hell knocked out of them, but feel noth ing, fear nothing. . . *(Lowers his head* Look at our lieutenant. He's like a lum of red-hot iron. God help the Jerry he get his hands on.

KRIVENKO *(opens the door and step out)*: Lieutenant! Your name . . . *(the lieu tenant slowly walks towards Krivenko)* D you know Mikhailovka?

LIEUTENANT: Fyodorov. Yes, I kno Mikhailovka.

KRIVENKO: Take over command of th newly formed company. As soon as you ge reinforcements head immediately for Mikhai lovka and there report to the commander o the 105th Division. Contact 7th Army H. Q Code name, "Lily of the Valley". Go ahead

LIEUTENANT: Yes, sir. *(Leaves.)*

KRIVENKO *(steps into the car, look around him and ironically remarks)*: Wel swallowed enough dust? *(Suddenly with emo tion)* Men, there's the city; beyond it—ignc miny, death. *(Pointing in the opposite direc tion)* Over there the Germans. Get me *(Surveys the men)* Yours is going to be a un worth its weight in gold. *(Sits down and give the signal to drive off. The car slowly pul out, the men standing at attention. . . .)*

PASSING SOLDIER: There's real ma for you. You don't happen to know his nam do you?

STEPAN (*rolling a cigarette*): Pyotr M khailovich Krivenko. In 1941 led us ou of encirclement. He's a he-man, all righ Was a divisional commander at the tim *(Shaking his head)* He's certainly gone up i the world.

(The morose lieutenant again appears.)

LIEUTENANT: Fall in!

(At the words of command the two soldiers wh had slept through all the tumult on the slo of the ditch jump up and gripping their gu run to join the men forming ranks.)

(The curtain, designed like a map, drop Various lines and arrows on map depict critic situation at approaches to city.)

SCENE 2

Front H. Q. In the foreground a narrow corridor which serves as anteroom. Behind, the co mander's office. The office is partitioned from the anteroom by a door and walls of the corrid forming a portal running right and left. To the right the wall of the corridor covers approximate a third of the stage. On the other side of this wall, the commander's private room, is connected wi his office.

To the right of the anteroom a window faces the street. General Panteleyev is at the windo To the left a table at which the adjutant on duty is seated. Nearby, Liza sitting on the edge of a cha In the office General Vinogradov and the chiefs of artillery and reconnaissance are poring over a m spread out on a large table. The profound silence is relieved by occasional remarks spoken in l voices. The curtain goes up—a long pause.

LIZA *(to the adjutant)*: Do you happen to know why I've been summoned by the commander of the front?

ADJUTANT: Haven't the slightest idea.

(Pause)

LIZA: How quiet it is here.

ADJUTANT: Quiet? It's stifling. *(Lifts t receiver and in a muffled voice)* Well . . . h much longer? *(Replaces the receiver, gloomil* Since morning we've had no contact wi the 7th Army. Talk about dead silence. A yet it seems to me I can hear the drip, dr

of blood where the telephone wire is broken.

LIZA *(looks at him anxiously)*: Things were pretty bad there yesterday. I belong to the 7th Army.

(A loud, angry voice shatters the silence. From the right General Krivenko and the Sebonnaire Operations Chief, Sergeyev, enter, arguing vehemently.)

KRIVENKO: We've been entrusted with the defense of the City. Its fall would be a mortal blow. That's why the Germans are going all out; and we? We're stretching the front to breaking point and the Germans are piercing it; we're throwing up defenses and the Germans are by-passing them. . . .

SERGEYEV *(coldly)*: You seem to forget yourself. Such are the orders of the Command.

KRIVENKO *(in a rage)*: I beg your pardon.

(General Panteleyev turns round. Liza gets up with a smile on catching sight of Krivenko whom she knows. He brushes past, oblivious to his surroundings, and furiously strides into the office. He seems to be on the verge of committing violence. Instead he comes to an abrupt stop and silently stands erect.)

SERGEYEV: Comrade General, the commander of the 21st Army insists on his plan.

VINOGRADOV *(sighs, twirls a pencil)*: I'm sorry my friend, but it can't be helped. The front lacks the necessary reserves for the operation suggested by you. I recommend fortifications to make up for the lack of forces. You disdane defense.

KRIVENKO: Comrade Commander, I. . . .

VINOGRADOV *(with a gesture interrupts him, nods to staff officer)*: Thank you. . . I shall call you when I need you.

(A long pause ensues while the two generals leave the office.)

ADJUTANT *(to Liza)*: I think there's no sense in waiting any longer. Maybe you'll 'phone later?

LIZA *(getting up from chair)*: All right, I'm spending the night in town. *(Leaves.)*

VINOGRADOV *(with a weary smile)*: Well, you can now say what's on your mind. But first take a seat, Pyotr Mikhailovich.

KRIVENKO *(with difficulty restraining himself)*: Vladimir Vikentyevich, forgive me. . . I ran into General Batalov a short while ago; his army is already detraining.

VINOGRADOV *(quietly)*: Yes, the Supreme Headquarters reserves are beginning to arrive. But so far I've had no instructions from the High Command regarding them.

KRIVENKO: But our orders are to hold the city. It is imperative that we immediately concentrate all forces, all reserves to halt and smash the enemy. *(Pleadingly)* Vladimir Vikentyevich, the situation justifies your initiative!

VINOGRADOV: Sorry, but I'm accustomed to obeying orders of the Command to the letter. . . *(Gloomily scans the map)* As for the reserves—look and see for yourself. . . At Mikhailovka the Germans are throwing in another six divisions. Any day now we'll be faced with a new breakthrough and the encirclement of the 7th Army. . . I must hold on to the reserves to forestall disaster and give the army a chance to withdraw.

KRIVENKO *(gets up bursting with rage)*: Sir, you can have me removed if you so wish . . . but since you've asked me to speak my mind all I can say is that we're surrendering the city!

VINOGRADOV *(rises from his seat)*: General Krivenko . . . my decision is final. *(Krivenko stiffens. Vinogradov glances at his watch. A strained silence sets in. Vinogradov, speaking in a very quiet voice)* The new commander of the front, Colonel-General Muravyev will arrive today. In all probability he'll bring the latest instructions from Supreme Headquarters.

KRIVENKO *(in joyous amazement)*: Did you say Muravyev? . . Are you leaving? *(Vinogradov looks at him with a faint, sad smile of superiority)* Forgive me, Vladimir Vikentyevich. I'm blunt and outspoken. . . Muravyev is an old friend of mine.

VINOGRADOV *(presses the bell on his table)*: And you reckon he won't . . . er, hamper your success?

KRIVENKO *(flares up)*: Anyhow, I'm glad, very glad that the end of disastrous indecision is at hand.

(The adjutant enters.)

Permit me to withdraw.

VINOGRADOV *(To the adjutant)*: My greatcoat. *(Dryly to Krivenko)* You may leave, good-bye.

(Krivenko defiantly clicks his heels and swiftly walks out of the room. The adjutant brings in the greatcoat) Call the car.

(The adjutant leaves. Vinogradov is alone, mechanically buttons up his coat. Wearily sits down on the chair, lost in thought. Sergeyev enters.)

VINOGRADOV *(softly)*: So that's that.

SERGEYEV *(feelingly)*: You know, Vladimir Vikentyevich, in the present situation the man who gets away in time can consider himself lucky. I certainly don't envy the new commander.

VINOGRADOV: Yes. . . *(sighs)* But this is an inglorious end to a long military career. . . *(Pause)* I can't help thinking that maybe I'm to blame, after all. What have I overlooked? Where's the mistake?

SERGEYEV: Vladimir Vikentyevich, when a storm like this is raging the sole mistake of the individual is that he happens to be caught in it. *(Slowly)* Maybe it's not advisable to send this report to Supreme Headquarters. . . The situation is presented pretty bluntly.

VINOGRADOV: It's my duty. *(Looks at his watch)* Let's go. *(They go into the anteroom. Vinogradov looks around)* Where's the doctor from the 105th Division?

ADJUTANT: I sent her back, sir, I assumed that you would be leaving immediately. . . She'll be 'phoning later.

VINOGRADOV *(frowning)*: What a pity. *(To General Panteleyev)* Please excuse me, Ivan Anisimovich. I must be there to meet him. We'll be back soon.

PANTELEYEV: That's all right. I'll wait. *(Vinogradov and Sergeyev leave. The sound of a car driving off. Panteleyev again turns to the window. A pause. Again the sound of a car. Unnoticed by those in the room a stocky general walks in unhurriedly.)*

GENERAL: Is General Vinogradov here?

ADJUTANT (*jumps up*): The Commander of the Front has gone to meet Colonel-General Muravyev.

GENERAL: I'm Muravyev.

ADJUTANT (*disconcerted*): I beg your pardon. . . This is your office, Comrade Commander.

(*Muravyev walks towards the cabinet but observing the immovable back of Panteleyev approaches him instead.*)

MURAVYEV: Anything particularly interesting?

PANTELEYEV: Eh? (*With the unexpected agility of stout people he swings round and stands erect*) Permit me to introduce myself: Chief of Fortifications, Lieutenant-General of the Engineer Corps, Panteleyev.

MURAVYEV (*giving him his hand*): How do you do?

PANTELEYEV: Ahem . . . with whom have I the honour?. . .

MURAVYEV: Muravyev. . . I shall be in command of the Front.

PANTELEYEV: I thought so. (*Sees Muravyev glance at the window. Confusedly*) I beg your pardon. I was lost in contemplation.

MURAVYEV (*looking out of the window*): What were you contemplating? A deserted street. . . A crossroad.

PANTELEYEV (*nodding*): Yes, yes. But actually something closely resembling a defile with excellent positions for cross-firing. Now imagine a machine-gun stationed here at the window, and out there, around the corner an anti-tank gun or small cannon—why, you couldn't want a better position. . . Of course, that building over there would have to be demolished to clear the fore-field and simultaneously form an anti-tank obstacle.

MURAVYEV (*knitting his brows*): You seem to take it for granted. . . (*Sharply*) The Germans will not enter the city. What have you done to prevent them from doing so, general?

PANTELEYEV (*standing at attention*): I'm here to report.

MURAVYEV: Let's go into the office.

(*The two rapidly make their way to the office. Panteleyev pulls out an old torn map and unfolds it.*)

MURAVYEV: Is this how you draw up your reports? Why, it's nothing but a scrap of paper.

PANTELEYEV (*disconcerted*): Just so. It's my personal map. . . Always in my pocket. (*Hurriedly opens a folder*) Here are the actual blueprints and maps of the completed defense line.

MURAVYEV (*exasperated*): Well, what's it all about?

PANTELEYEV: Permit me to report. The situation keeps changing. . . While I was waiting to report a fresh dispatch came in to the effect that the defense line had been by-passed by the Germans and it is therefore useless. (*Coughs*) Rather than lose precious time I immediately outlined a new plan. Yes, yes, I admit, it isn't the proper way to do things. . . .

(*Muravyev looks askance at him and knitting his brows, silently bends over the old map. Vinogradov hurriedly enters the anteroom. "Has he arrived?" "Yes, sir . . . in the office."*

Vinogradow enters the office.)

VINOGRADOV: So sorry. I can't understand how we missed each other. Welcome, Colonel-General. Glad to see you!

MURAVYEV (*goes to meet him*): My fault. I branched off. . . Wanted to have a look at the city. (*Vigorously shaking his hand*) How do you do, my teacher.

VINOGRADOV: From now on you're going to do the teaching. Have you been waiting long? Let's go in. Take off your greatcoat. This is your room.

MURAVYEV: Just a minute. (*Returns to the table*) You'll forgive me, Vladimir Vikentyevich. I didn't want to lose time and in your absence. . . (*signs the old map drawn up by Panteleyev*) Go ahead. . . Report in detail afterwards. (*Accompanied by Vinogradov moves towards the private room. Suddenly stops and calls out to the departing Panteleyev*) I say. . . You're afraid, aren't you, that the Germans will reach the city?

PANTELEYEV: Nothing of the kind. But . . . they'll get no further than this house. (*Points to the floor.*)

(*Muravyev sharply turns round and walks off with Vinogradov. Panteleyev leaves. "Minutka" enters carrying a suitcase.*)

"MINUTKA" (*nonchalantly*): Is this the place?

ADJUTANT (*sternly*): Where do you think you are? Stand at attention.

"MINUTKA": I guess I could. (*Leisurely places the suitcase on the floor and then drops his hands to his side*) Allow me to ask where are our headquarters?

ADJUTANT: And who may the "ours" be?

"MINUTKA" (*carelessly*): Colonel-General Muravyev's.

ADJUTANT: Oh! I see. . . Come this way. (*Accompanies "Minutka"*) And who are you?

"MINUTKA": Well, I'm down as his personal chauffeur. . . But actually I'm his shadow.

(*Carries the suitcase into the room. The adjutant, somewhat disconcerted, goes back to the anteroom. Suddenly he hears from the other side of the door: "About turn!". . . "Forward march. . ." The door opens and "Minutka" comes out goose-stepping. Muravyev stands in the door.*)

MURAVYEV: Quick march. . . Eyes right. . . ("*Minutka*" *assiduously obeys orders*) He's an insolent rascal and needs taking down a peg or two occasionally. (*To the adjutant*) You'll be getting a call from the doctor of the 105th Division. Please tell her to come over at 11:30. She's my wife. (*Leaves*)

ADJUTANT: Yes, sir. (*Returns to the table, mopping his brow*) Whew! What a day!

(*Vinogradov and Muravyev enter, still engaged in conversation. Vinogradov moves to the writing desk.*)

VINOGRADOV: Von Klaus still remains master of the situation. (*Suddenly recollects*) Excuse me, sheer force of habit. . . Your place.

MURAVYEV: Don't bother. (*Sits down in an armchair, passes his hand across his face*) It looks as if we'll have to do some hard thinking.

(*Pause*)

VINOGRADOV (*troubled*): But what have the High Command decided upon? I assumed that you would bring along the plan of Supreme Headquarters.

(*Offering no reply, Muravyev gets up and goes to the window. Vinogradov expectantly watches him.*)

MURAVYEV: What a fine city! (*A pause, musingly*) I recall how during the exercises in tactics at the Academy the pros and cons of your various solutions were analyzed. . . But damn it all if battles were decided by analyses alone there'd be no battles. . . There are other factors such as will and necessity. (*Sharply turns and intensely*) We must, we've got to win. And this means that the city must be held at all costs.

VINOGRADOV (*inclining his head*): Yes, Supreme Headquarters categorically demands this. (*Pause*) Any news about the second front?

MURAVYEV (*turning round*): And do you think that a second front will save the day for us?

VINOGRADOV (*shrugging his shoulders*): I only want to warn you should we succeed in stopping the Germans . . . without a second front they'll keep on switching fresh divisions against us until they achieve results.

(*Muravyev knitting his brows, silently bends over the map. A pause.*)

MURAVYEV (*slowly*): And when all is said and done Klaus has again overestimated his forces and underestimated ours. . . Yes, above all artillery. . . .

VINOGRADOV: Yes, that's where we are strongest. (*Falls silent*) But what about munitions? At the moment these are being transported along the one line still left us. But that too will be cut.

MURAVYEV (*agitatedly*): But the new branch line?

VINOGRADOV: It won't be ready for another month yet. (*Muravyev helplessly passes his hand across his forehead*) The evacuation of the factory equipment will deprive us of considerable supplies, to say nothing of freight cars. This means a further slowing down in the stocking of munitions.

MURAVYEV (*as if giving up, laughs*): Vladimir Vikentyevich, you sound like inexorable reality!

VINOGRADOV: It's a melancholy role. (*Quietly*) Believe me, it hurts me to leave you such a legacy. But nothing I might say would ease the burden.

(*Lavrov enters the anteroom. Nodding to the adjutant he impatiently paces the floor. Adjutant enters the office.*)

ADJUTANT: Comrade Commander, the Secretary of the Regional Party Committee, Lavrov, to see you.

MURAVYEV: Please ask him to wait a minute. (*The adjutant withdraws. Muravyev walks up to Vinogradov. Speaking with difficulty*) Vladimir Vikentyevich, you're my teacher, and you were in command of this front. . . I fully understand that it isn't easy, but the situation calls for it. I want you to remain as my deputy or as Chief of Staff. . . .

VINOGRADOV (*taken aback, in a very quiet voice*): Please don't think it's a question of my pride. . . .

MURAVYEV (*hurriedly*): Comrade Stalin has authorized me to make this proposal to you. He has confidence in you; he highly values you.

VINOGRADOV (*heaves a sigh*): You don't understand just how difficult it is for me, but . . . (*dropping his hands to his side*) if it's necessary I'm prepared to remain in any role.

MURAVYEV: Thank you. (*Shakes his hand; quickly crosses the room and opens the door leading to the anteroom*) Good afternoon, Comrade Lavrov. How're things?

LAVROV (*rapidly walks into the room*): Vile! (*He moves and speaks as if propelled by the sheer inertia of incessant and intensive activity*) Are you the new commander? . . More than five thousand of our workers are fighting alongside your men. We can give you more, only give us a free hand. (*Impatiently*) We're supposed to evacuate the equipment from the country's biggest plant but we're still in the dark as to how many days and how many trains are at our disposal in order to finish the job.

MURAVYEV: The evacuation of industrial equipment has been cancelled.

LAVROV (*in amazement*): What? . . . Has the danger passed?

(*Just then the sirens sound an alert immediately followed by the muffled thud of an explosion. Lavrov rushes to the window.*)

MURAVYEV (*after listening for a second*): Vladimir Vikentyevich, just what is the actual state of affairs with regard to our stocks of ammunition? (*Vinogradov shows him a chart.*)

MURAVYEV (*with mathematical precision begins calculating*): The gradual destruction of the factories in the very first week will decrease output . . . repair work will help . . . (*Lavrov slowly turns from the window, tensely listens to Muravyev's deliberate calculations*) Then we have to figure on losing a certain percentage of labour power. . . I reckon it'll take at least a month before the factories are completely out of commission.

LAVROV (*in a voice heavy with anguish*): And to think there was a time when we used to figure out in the same way how output would increase by the week, how these very plants would grow and expand.

MURAVYEV: Why are you still in civvies? I have brought orders appointing you a member of the Military Council.

LAVROV (*agitated*): But what about the industrial equipment brought here from the Ukraine, and the western factories?

MURAVYEV: The army isn't going to defend a deserted city. I'm repeating the actual words of Comrade Stalin. (*The thud*

of an explosion nearby, the crash of splintered glass in the vicinity. Muravyev frowns) And by the by, will you see that Front Headquarters are transferred out of town.

VINOGRADOV: Just how far out?

MURAVYEV: Well, so that we are not disturbed by the cannonade. We need quiet at Headquarters.

(*Telephone rings.*)

MURAVYEV (*lifts the receiver*): Hello. . . (*Expression on his face indicates that something extraordinary has happened. Lavrov closely follows what he is saying. Muravyev, continuing to listen, says to Vinogradov*) It's started. . . They're attacking Mikhailovka. (*In amazement*) What's that? He himself drove in? . . . Incredible. Bring him here at once. (*Replaces the receiver*) A German staff officer with operational plans has been captured by men of the 7th Army. (*Goes up to Lavrov. Gravely, in an undertone*) Comrade Lavrov, we'll have to declare a state of siege in the city.

LAVROV: Obviously. I'll summon a meeting of the Party Committee which you should address.

MURAVYEV (*throwing up his hands*): I can't.

LAVROV: When it's necessary there is no such thing as: can't.

MURAVYEV: That's the spirit. (*Thinks*) Would 11:30 be O.K.?

(*Lights go out*)

(*Immediately in the darkness the sounds of a guitar and a nostalgic song are heard. Lights go on. The same setting, only to the right, the commander's private room. Late night, the room illuminated by a paraffin lamp. "Minutka" accompanying himself on the guitar, sings soulfully. In the anteroom an oil lamp is burning on the adjutant's table. The office is in darkness, the only light coming through the open door. Groping in the dark, the adjutant is trying the switches.*)

"MINUTKA": You're wasting your time—the power station is smoking to the high heavens. (*Strumming on the guitar*) Can't say I particularly fancy country life. . . But let's look at it from another angle. A decent sized bomb and the town is in complete darkness. I've been running my feet off to get the commander an electric bulb. Now let's say a bomb hits a village. Well, at most it'll smash a couple of lamps. Then all that is needed is to strike a match and hey presto you have light. What do you think of that unexpected advantage of oil lamps?

ADJUTANT (*gloomily*): Well, if we don't hold the city the oil lamps will go out too. The Germans will get a grip on the river along which the oil is brought from Baku. (*Telephone buzzes, he goes to his desk.*)

"MINUTKA": Don't worry we'll hold the city alright. With us here, things will be straightened out in a jiffy.

ADJUTANT (*lifts the receiver*): Yes. . . Let her pass.

(*A short pause. "Minutka" goes back to his guitar. Liza appears carrying a haversack.*)

LIZA: Is General Muravyev in?

ADJUTANT: Yes, yes, we've been expecting you. . . This way please. . . (*offers to take the haversack*) Allow me?

LIZA (*in a hurry*): Don't bother.

ADJUTANT (*with polite insistance takes the haversack which proves to be very heavy*) What a weight!

LIZA: Not at all, it's a matter of getting used to it. (*Pressing her hands to her breast she all but runs to the office*) Where is he?

"MINUTKA" (*jumps up*): How do you do Elizaveta Mikhailovna? The commander has left; he asked me to meet you.

LIZA (*in a disappointed voice*): Left? (*Sits down on a chair at the door*) Hello, "Minutka". . . Well, how are they treating you here?

"MINUTKA" (*beaming*): Can't grumble. We've thrown back the Germans on the Central Front. Now we've been sent here.

(*The adjutant brings in the haversack and hastily leaves.*)

LIZA (*glancing round the room*): So this is where he lives. . . I recognize his neatness.

"MINUTKA": Excuse me, Elizaveta Mikhailovna, I'm responsible for the order in the room. He hasn't been here for more than an hour.

LIZA (*animatedly*): But he'll be back soon won't he? (*Eagerly*) Quickly, "Minutka" give me the news. When you were in Moscow did you visit the house? How's Tanechka? Tell me all the news!

"MINUTKA": Here goes. . . The kid's fine, so is Kirill Stepanovich. Gee, the politeness shown us not only by lieutenants and captains but by the big shots, despite my low rank. . . (*Shakes his head*) There was that funny incident with a colonel. . .

LIZA: All right, "Minutka". How's he? I suppose he gets no sleep and smokes all the time?

"MINUTKA": Don't worry, he's none the worse for it! Take it from me, Elizaveta Mikhailovna, I've seen things in my life-time as a Moscow taxi driver. There were nights when the speedometer was ready to crack, but I was still going strong. But here . . . I've seen some places but this about takes the cake!

LIZA: Yes, yes. . . So he's in good health? . . .

"MINUTKA": Sure, he is. . . Says to me: "Stop singing at the wheel, you'll smash the car again!" Now if I don't sing I'm sure to fall asleep with the car going all out, see? And if I crash into a telegraph pole? I say to him. That'll be the end of your military operation. Ye gods, I'll pack up, war or no war . . . there are ways of working on the ticket. . . But who'd drive for him!

(*A girl in uniform brings in tea on a tray*) I've ordered a cup of tea for you.

LIZA: Thanks, I'm not thirsty.

"MINUTKA": Commander's orders.

LIZA: Oh, I have an idea. . . Let's lay the table before he gets back. (*Jumps up, throws her greatcoat over the chair*) Have you a tablecloth, or a clean sheet?

"MINUTKA" (*goes to a suitcase*): Good idea.

LIZA (*clearing the table*): Is there a bottle of wine in the place? What about a couple

tins of canned food? Let me do it, "Minutka". What a pity there are no flowers.

(*The girl withdraws.*)

"MINUTKA" (*moves away*): Whatever you do, Elizaveta Mikhailovna, don't make the room untidy.

LIZA (*softly*): "Minutka", you can go, if you like. I'll manage.

"MINUTKA": That's all right. I've nothing to do just now. (*Watches her condescendingly*) You know, Elizaveta Mikhailovna, I've been figuring things out: it's all wrong. . . .

LIZA: What's all wrong?

"MINUTKA": How comes it that you, with your rank, are here, at the front in all this filth and grime. A general's wife should be somewhere in the interior enjoying the comforts of her husband's allowance.

LIZA: Well, you see, "Minutka", I became a doctor before I married a general.

"MINUTKA": What difference does that make. For that matter there were no generals, before, and now there are. (*Pause. Sceptically watches her arrange the table*) The Colonel-General likes to have the salt-cellar on his right.

LIZA (*vexed*): Don't interfere, "Minutka", I know what I'm doing. (*At the same time she slowly changes it to the right.*)

"MINUTKA": That's better.

LIZA (*incisively*): You may go. I'll send for you when you're needed.

"MINUTKA": Yes, madam. . . Allow me, Comrade Major, to take my guitar.

LIZA: By all means, take it.

(*"Minutka" seats himself in the anteroom with his guitar, and starts singing again. He has a good voice. Liza, after critically surveying the table, wanders about the room and then hurriedly walks up to a wall mirror, fixes her hair and with her hand on her cheek contemplates herself in the glass.*

The girl in uniform and army boots hurriedly brings in wine and canned food.)

"MINUTKA": Must you make that noise? . . Where do you think you are. On the march?

(*The girl after placing the wine and food on the table, stops at the door and watches Liza combing her hair.*)

GIRL (*timidly*): I have a blouse something like yours, only with a blue stripe. . . But I'm in a pretty bad way for stockings. I've laddered mine wearing them with these boots. (*Offers a small bouquet of flowers*) These are for you.

LIZA: Flowers! (*Runs up and kisses her*) You're a dear. . . .

GIRL (*confused*): They're nothing much. . . I picked them out in the field. Is there anything else you'll be wanting?

LIZA: No. Thanks very much.

(*The girl passes "Minutka".*)

"MINUTKA" (*stops playing*): Sergeant!

GIRL: What do you want now?

"MINUTKA": How old are you?

GIRL: 19.

"MINUTKA" (*dispassionately stares at her for a second*): Hm, not at all bad looking. If only you wouldn't make so much noise in those boots. . . .

(*Again he goes back to his guitar. Liza, after placing the flowers on the table and looking over the room, catches sight of her discarded greatcoat. She hangs it up on the rack next to Muravyev's. Liza passes her hand over his greatcoat and rubs her face against it. Suddenly the telephone rings.*)

LIZA (*excitedly*): "Minutka" . . . If it's Muravyev tell him I'm here. . . .

"MINUTKA" (*impressively over the 'phone*): What's the matter? . . No, this isn't the commander. . . Who gave you the telephone number? (*to Liza*) Somebody wants to speak to you.

LIZA (*dashes to the telephone*): Hello. Oh, it's you, Mitrich. (*In alarmed tone*) What, already? But why? . . Mitrich, be a good fellow and give me another half hour. . . (*Listens, her voice sharply changes*) Is it so serious as that? . . No, no, I'm coming right away. . . (*Replaces the receiver, feverishly*) I've got to leave, "Minutka", give me a sheet of paper. (*Sits down at the table, snatches up a pen and begins to write.*)

"MINUTKA": The commander said you were to wait.

LIZA: I can't. Something's gone wrong on the road to Mikhailovka, and I must get through to the division before it's too late. (*Jumps up, crumples the paper*) No there's no time to write. Give him this message . . . well, tell him I couldn't wait. . . (*Hurriedly puts on her greatcoat*) The car was supposed to remain overnight but is now leaving unexpectedly. . . (*Picks up her haversack and leaves.*)

"MINUTKA" (*tries to take the haversack from her*): Elizaveta Mikhailovna, do you mean to tell me the car can't wait for the wife of a Commander? I'll give it to them. . . What's their rank?

LIZA (*throws the haversack over her shoulder*): Don't you meddle in my affairs. Goodbye, "Minutka". (*Stops at the door*) Tell him I'll be at Mikhailovka; maybe he'll drive over.

(*Leaves. "Minutka" violently strikes several vague but "heartrending" cords. The adjutant softly warns: "the commander". Muravyev quickly enters the room.*)

"MINUTKA": Comrade Commander, Elizaveta Mikhailovna has just left.

MURAVYEV: What? Where to? But I told you to ask her to wait.

"MINUTKA" (*smugly*): Ask her to wait. . . The car was leaving for Mikhailovka.

(*Muravyev silently takes off his greatcoat and hangs it up. . . Observes the table laid for a meal, walks over to it.*)

"MINUTKA" (*ironically*): She seemed to think you'd be hungry. . . .

MURAVYEV (*morosely*): Mind your own business. . . As a matter of fact, I am.

"MINUTKA" (*feelingly*): Now how could I keep her from going; she told me to "mind my own business."

MURAVYEV (*with a laugh*): She doesn't seem to care very much for you, eh?

"MINUTKA" (*shrugging his shoulders*): If you'll allow me to say so, I think she's jealous.

(*Muravyev goes into the office. Smokes. The red glow of his cigarette looks like dancing pin-points in the darkness.*)

MURAVYEV's voice from the office: How long is it since she left?

"MINUTKA": Only a little while ago... She asked me to tell you: I'll be in Mikhailovka; maybe he'll drive over.

MURAVYEV's voice: In Mikhailovka?.. You shouldn't have let her go. (*"Minutka" brings in a lamp*) Go away, who the dickens asked you!

(*Again the glow of a cigarette in the darkness. Muravyev raises the blind, the red glow of the burning city is visible from the window; the immobile figure of Muravyev clearly outlined. Stands for a while with lowered head, walks over to the desk.*)

MURAVYEV (*picks up the telephone receiver*): Has the prisoner arrived? Bring him in. Fetch a light!

"MINUTKA" (*carrying a lamp*): Kirill Stepanovich, you're always like that: whenever I think of the right thing it's "who asked you to"; when I don't think of it you say, "do it".

MURAVYEV: More light! Let's have all the light you have.

(*The Chiefs of Reconnaissance and the Operations departments enter; a torn map and other captured documents are spread out on the table. All bend over them. A minute later a prisoner is led into the office, or, to be more precise, dragged in. Suddenly he elbows aside the guards and standing stiffly erect, screeches "Heil Hitler." Just then the adjutant enters with a table lamp. The flickering light shed by the lamp outlines a lean figure in torn uniform, with eyes burning in a face black with smoke and grime. That unexpected screech was so full of savage power that it was followed by a dead silence.*)

MURAVYEV (*calmly observing prisoner*): Nerves.

PRISONER (*slumps and nearly loses his balance. He is given a chair. Speaks in German.*)

CHIEF OF RECONNAISSANCE (*translates*): Shoot or let me sleep. (*To the prisoner*) Your name?

PRISONER (*swaying and crying as if delirious. Speaks in German.*)

CHIEF OF RECONNAISSANCE (*monotonously translates*): You won't get a word out of me... Sleep... I haven't slept for three nights... I drove like mad three hundred kilometres... and then on foot... sleep... It's more than I can stand... I'll tell everything, only give me a chance to sleep... sleep... (*prisoner drops his head on his chest, falls silent.*)

MURAVYEV (*to "Minutka"*): Fetch me water, or better still, vodka. (*Frowning at the guard*) Did you illtreat him?

(*A soldier steps out from the darkness. It is Stepan.*)

STEPAN: I should say not, Colonel-General. We know our job... As for him, why, he kept twisting like a cat. And talk about screaming. What's more he bit my hands. (*Shows bandaged hands and looks askance at the German*) I admit it wasn't easy going.

MURAVYEV (*walks up to him*): How did you get hold of him?

STEPAN: This morning the Fritzes dislodged us from Mikhailovka. Our lieutenant said: "What the hell's this?..." So we shoved them out and got back to where we belonged. It was then that this fellow came driving headlong into the village. Our lieutenant said: "Rush him to headquarters right away...."

(*"Minutka" brings in a glass of vodka. With a nod of the head Muravyev indicates the prisoner.*)

"MINUTKA" (*softly*): Comrade Commander... Waste vodka on that Jerry! If I'd known I'd have brought water. (*Stops short. Takes the vodka to the prisoner.*)

STEPAN: And so there was I left with him on my hands. And not a car in sight. Only just outside the town did I run into one, and even then they didn't want to give me a lift... but the woman doctor from our division, who was in the car insisted on us having it. Even so we had to walk most of the way. Well, it was then that I really gave him... well, gave him no respite... He was a tough handful!

MURAVYEV (*closely observing prisoner*) So the German's a hard nut to crack?

STEPAN (*darts a quick, understanding look at the General*): Well, he's tough as long as he feels he can do you in. But if he's made to walk his feet off he peters out. Our men have better stuff in them.

MURAVYEV: You boys have done a splendid job.

STEPAN: Our lieutenant's a real hero!

MURAVYEV (*walks away and then stops*) Are you referring to the doctor of the 105th Division?

STEPAN: Yes, our... Elizaveta Mikhailovna.

MURAVYEV (*in a low voice*): And... how did she get back to Mikhailovka?

STEPAN: On foot, and she was lugging a pretty hefty bag.

MURAVYEV: The guards may leave. (*Returns to the table. The vodka has livened up the German who is sitting upright, with a supercilious expression on his face, staring in front of him. Muravyev addresses the Chief of Reconnaissance*) You will translate. Let him think I don't know any German. I want to observe him.

THE GERMAN: I know Russian.

MURAVYEV: Hm... All the better. It'll make things easier.

THE GERMAN: You won't get a word out of me.

MURAVYEV: What's left for you to say? You've brought us the map of the General Staff... (*Ironically*) What on earth made you drive into our lines, Major? What will General von Klaus have to say?

THE GERMAN: I carried out my orders to the letter. (*Vinogradov and Studentsov enter the office. The commander is covered with mud... It is obvious he has come straight from the car.*)

MURAVYEV (*after greeting them, indicates the prisoner, and then with ironical irritation*): Look, the map shows that Mikhailovka will be taken today, the 19th, and the fellow races at breakneck speed into the village because he has to make the timetable

(*Turning to the prisoner*) But supposing things don't work out according to schedule?

THE GERMAN (*laughs noiselessly and then stridently*): I'm on the laughing side—not you! The mechanism of the German offensive has already been set in motion, and looking at this map won't help you. I'll even tell you how many divisions there are and their dispositions. . . They are so many and they are advancing so rapidly that you'll just have enough time to realize where the disaster overtook you, but you will be powerless to avert it.

MURAVYEV: Such evidently is the underlying principle of your plan, you think that we shan't have time to do anything?

THE GERMAN (*excitedly*): Exactly. The clock is ticking out our time. Very soon you'll be facing me as I'm facing you now!

MURAVYEV: You're an insolent scoundrel! Get out! (*The Chief of Reconnaissance leads the prisoner out of the room. Muravyev swiftly bends over the map*) Look, they've given us only six days! Today, the 19th they plan to take Mikhailovka, on the 25th the city! Six days! And then. . . Saratov on August 10th, Kuibyshev on the 15th, Arzamas on September 10th. . . Obviously this is a new drive on Moscow!

VINOGRADOV: Comrade Commander. . . .

MURAVYEV (*doesn't hear him*): Do you get this? We're merely an episode, nothing more. (*Excitedly paces the floor*) They'll dispose of us in their stride, then switch North, cut our lines with Moscow, fight a decisive battle somewhere in between and at one stroke capture Moscow, win the campaign and maybe win the war. . . This major fellow is in the style of their whole strategy. . . Insolent scoundrel. Klaus too, is a pretty brazen fish! And Hitler is a swashbuckling adventurer.

VINOGRADOV: Comrade Commander . . . the Germans have captured Mikhailovka.

(*Heavy silence.*)

MURAVYEV (*curtly*): When?

STUDENTSOV: At 1:30 . . . The 105th Division repulsed all attacks. But tanks bypassed and broke in from the rear.

MURAVYEV (*concentrating on the map*): I still claim they're an insolent lot. (*Looks at his watch*) It's the 20th now—we've gained $1^1/_2$ hours. (*Again begins to pace the floor*) And so at every step we've got to wrest from them an hour, a day, a week. . . Time! That's the crux of the matter.

VINOGRADOV: I assumed we would withdraw the army.

MURAVYEV: Under no circumstances! Every position must be defended to the last. We've got to counter-attack ceaselessly wherever possible! The skunks must be kept on the move all the time, must be given no respite.

STUDENTSOV: But they're by-passing me, the 105th is already caught in a pincers.

MURAVYEV: The 105th? (*He interrupts with a strange expression on his face*) So what. Other armies will deal with this wedge! "Minutka", the car!

Curtain

ACT 2

SCENE 3

The left side of the stage in nocturnal darkness. A ravine cuts obliquely into the back of the stage. The star-studded sky reveals the line of shadowy slopes which are thrown into relief by searchlight beams—tracer bullets noiselessly sail across the sky.

The figure of a tommy gunner can be dimly seen; also a jeep with its radiator concealed; occasionally the darkness is pierced by the glow of a burning cigarette, a chink of light showing through a door or a spray of sparks coming from the roof of dugouts on the slope of the ravine. The indistinct sounds of a big camp; singing away in the distance.

On the right of the stage a roomy, illuminated dugout cut into the side of the ravine. The dugout is furnished with the maximum of comfort under the circumstances. The log walls are partly papered. By the left wall a freshly-planed table and stool. An electric lamp with an improvised lampshade hangs over the table. A door in the rear wall to the left leads to an anteroom which also serves as a kitchen with an exit to the left. Parallel with the door a bed, on the wall a carpet. General Krivenko is getting ready for bed. He mechanically fusses about with the pillow. Opposite him, standing at ease is his constant companion, his Chief of Staff. The two are conversing in low, informal tones.

KRIVENKO: And so, Petrovich, our day has rolled around. Why that diplomatic look on your face?

CHIEF OF STAFF: I'm somewhat disappointed. . . .

KRIVENKO: Why?

CHIEF OF STAFF: Well, while in town I heard rumours that you would be given command of the front.

KRIVENKO (*frowning*): Nonsense. . . Everything in its season. (*Pause*) The right man has been appointed. We'll show them yet how to fight. I only hope to goodness our neighbours are able to hold their own for a while.

CHIEF OF STAFF: You know that contact with the 7th Army has again been cut.

KRIVENKO (*alarmed, lifts his head*): With the 7th? Yes, I know. I'm expecting news. (*Regretfully*) Dash it all, here we're doing our damnest to hold the line and yet our neighbour's defenses have been pierced. No amount of brain racking seems to help matters. If only I had my way!

(*Adjutant enters.*)

ADJUTANT: Comrade Commander, a major from the 7th Army asks to be admitted, says it's personal.

KRIVENKO (*cheers up*): Did you say from

the 7th Army? How fortunate. Show him in. (*Adjutant goes out*) Petrovich, prepare the maps and a report—I'm going to see the new Commander tomorrow. It's now or never. (*Liza enters. Krivenko startled*) Liza?

LIZA: Medical officer of the 105th Division, Major Muravyeva.

KRIVENKO (*hurriedly jumps up, pulls on his tunic, and goes to meet her with outstretched hand*) How are you? At last you've come to see me. (*Looks at the officers*) And we were just talking about the 7th Army. What's doing over there?

LIZA: But I haven't come from the 7th Army; I'm on my way back from Front Headquarters. (*Worried*) Why, has anything happened?

KRIVENKO: No. . . Nothing bad or good. I thought perhaps you had some news. (*To the officers*) Well, that'll be all for the time being. See to it that contact is restored. Keep your ears and eyes peeled. . . (*Accompanies the officers to the door. Liza sits down on a stool. Krivenko hurriedly returns to her*) Liza, darling, it's so good to see you. But you're as thin as a rake! . . Where did we meet last?

LIZA (*smiling*): Near Kharkov . . . when we were having a bad time.

KRIVENKO: The only consolation is that things are worse now.

LIZA: (*sighs*): Yes, things are going from bad to worse.

KRIVENKO (*gayly*): Don't worry. There'll soon be a change for the better. Kirill is with us, isn't he?!

LIZA: Yes, I was so upset when I heard about it.

KRIVENKO: Well, I declare!

LIZA (*dully*): Ach, Pyotr, things are going so badly here; it would've been better, far better had he not been here. I'm worried, Pyotr; (*plaintively*) why did they have to appoint him? Everybody's been saying that you were going to be in command.

KRIVENKO (*vexed*): There seems to be no end to this talk. I'd like to know who started it all. And what's more I don't want to be.

LIZA (*slyly*): Come, come, Krivenko, You're not being honest about it.

KRIVENKO: Hm. As usual, you've hit the nail on the head. (*Laughs and then in a grave voice*) Maybe I'm not being perfectly honest, but not in the way you think. When I consider what's in the balance, and the responsibility of our position, I get shivers down my spine. Not everything depends on us and yet we know that we'll never be forgiven if we fail now.

LIZA: Yes, nobody will forgive us.

KRIVENKO (*excitedly*): It's like being in a boat during a storm. You're rowing might and main and yet you have a feeling that the boat is going to be dashed against the rocks. Then suddenly you see a haven and think maybe you'll make it. And then more than anything else you want to get your hand on the helm!

LIZA (*softly*): And now Kirill has been appointed instead of you. Were you very hurt?

KRIVENKO (*gayly*): On this score I can in all truthfulness answer no. I admire Kirill, have faith in him. He's crossed my path more than once and each time I've given way and followed him as I would an elder brother (*Laughs*) Of course, I'll grow up one day and then I fear it's going to be a nice kettle of fish. (*Suddenly*) Good gracious, here I am forgetting I'm host and letting you sit in your greatcoat. Take it off.

LIZA: Thanks. I don't think I will. Just dropped in. You see I have a favour to ask you. It goes against the grain having to resort to influential acquaintances, but I have no choice in the matter. The point is Pyotr that on the way to Mikhailovka we gave up the car to take a prisoner to H. Q. without delay. It was my fault—I talked our men into doing it.

KRIVENKO: I take it you want a car. We'll see what we can do about it.

LIZA: Of course, you're pulling my leg. Can't I get the car immediately?

KRIVENKO: You're on your way to the 7th. (*Slowly*) Why are you in such a hurry?

LIZA: We must get there quickly. At front H. Q. they told us the situation at Mikhailovka had worsened and that we'd better hurry if we wanted to get through. And here we've been walking for two hours already, not to mention looking for a car here. . . .

KRIVENKO: Well, Liza, as a matter of fact you can't go to Mikhailovka now. You'd better spend the night here and we'll see what can be done in the morning.

LIZA (*alarmed*): Why, what's the matter? Is the 7th in a really bad way?

KRIVENKO: I wouldn't say bad. . . .

LIZA (*impatiently*): Oh, alright. I understand—even if the situation is bad you wouldn't say so. I don't care. (*And then passionately*) But I do! I'm carrying medical supplies and if you knew what's happening to our men!

KRIVENKO (*with sudden exasperation*) I just don't understand Kirill. What are you messing about at the front for? Isn't there enough work for doctors in the rear? All Generals' wives are at home; only you seem to want to be anywhere but at home.

LIZA: Why all this concern? I'm not your wife!

KRIVENKO. Enough Liza. You know me. Once I've made up my mind nothing can change it.

LIZA (*flares up*): I don't think you've always had your way as far as I am concerned. (*Gets up*) If you can't get us a car we'll see what we can do about it ourselves.

KRIVENKO (*in a level voice*): Stop that! I'm in command here, you're a Major . . of the medical corps. Clear?

LIZA (*for a second looks at him bewildered, shakes her head*): All right. I'll remain, only stop ordering me about. I'm here as a guest. (*Laughs*) I ought to have known that nobody could be more stubborn than you.

KRIVENKO (*brightening up*): That's better. Take off your coat, we'll have supper. . . (*Quickly goes to the anteroom. Liza slowly removes her greatcoat and hangs it up. She takes off her beret but, on second thought puts it on again. Sits down, fixes her hair. Examines the dugout. Kriven*

returning calls out: "yes, yes, for two." Takes a stool and sits down next to Liza. Takes her hand in both of his and with eyes shining with unexpected tenderness looks at her.)

KRIVENKO: Liza, Liza. . . What's happened to the world. Here you're sent out into the night alone. And do you remember how you used to burst into angry tears because you'd turn sick at the mere sight of blood in the clinic?

LIZA (*smiling*): I remember. And I also remember how you tried to tell me I was a fool, that being so pretty I should go in for acting and not for medicine. (*Laughs softly*) What young fools we were.

KRIVENKO (*dropping his head*): Yes. . . What young fools.

LIZA: And Kirill used to snort and frown and say I wasn't anything to get excited about, that I had better take myself in hand, otherwise he'd throw me out. (*In amazement*) I never thought I'd marry him.

KRIVENKO: Yes, Kirill's idea of courtship was strange, to say the least.

LIZA (*gayly*): But Kirill didn't court me at all! (*Thinks for a while and laughs out loud*) Do you know how he proposed to me? He was silent, frowned and then said suddenly: "The wife of a soldier mustn't be afraid of blood." I simply stared at him. "What makes you think I'll be the wife of a soldier?" You will." When next we met it was: "If the wife of a soldier wants to be a doctor it would be better if she were a surgeon." Well, I finally lost my temper, but all he did was to grin and say: "I'm sure you'll marry Krivenko."

KRIVENKO (*reproachfully*): Liza. . . .

LIZA (*absent-mindedly*): What's that? (*Reminiscing*) How strange to recall what we were like before the war, the things that bothered us . . . we were like children. Do you know that at the beginning of the war I went to the front to be with Kirill. The difficulties I had—he was transferred so often from place to place.

KRIVENKO: Yes. Promotion came his way quickly.

LIZA: And you know the attitude in the army toward a husband and wife being in the same unit. Here I was having my battles with the personnel department. Kirill wouldn't lift a finger to help me. And no sooner did I get a transfer than he got a new appointment. Well, it so happened that I once delayed my transfer; afterwards I myself didn't want to go, and then I stopped thinking about it altogether.

KRIVENKO (*smiling*): Have you forgotten Kirill?

LIZA (*fervently*): No, you can't understand this. You see I know the war from another side. You're at the top; you think in terms of armies, divisions, equipment, whereas I am in the very thick of it, among people who are near and dear to me. All around there is so much pain, sorrow, joy, and on the operating table life itself . . . life! All the petty things have fallen away. Only in this war have I come to appreciate what the individual is capable of, how fine he is. There are times when you want to cry for sheer love of and . . . pride in him. You are overwhelmed by this sentiment. And you get so close to people that you look upon the division as your home, your family . . . I don't think about Kirill for months at a stretch. You know I simply can't imagine for the life of me how, after the war, we'll go back to the old interests, settle down to petty details of everyday life. (*Laughs*) I may even leave Kirill, for all I care! (*Suddenly in a hushed voice*) Oh no, that's not true, of course. . . While being bumped around in the car on my way here I was crying my eyes out because I missed seeing him. All in all, it's a fine mixup. (*Short pause*) I think I'd better go and see what's doing out there. . . I'll be back in a minute.

KRIVENKO: You'll do nothing of the kind.

LIZA: But listen, I must let the others know what's what. . . What's more they've got my haversack. I won't be long. (*Jumps up and throws her greatcoat over her shoulders.*)

KRIVENKO (*seeing her to the threshold*): Only be quick. . . Be careful, Liza, don't lose your way in the dark. I can't accompany you just now.

LIZA (*on the threshold, looks back with a smile*): My, how important you've become.

KRIVENKO (*sighing*): Alas, Liza, things are in such a holy mess, but we'll see how important we'll be a month from now.

(*Liza leaves. Krivenko takes a few aimless steps in the dugout, sits down on the stool at the table, stares at the floor. A girl in civilian dress with a white apron appears at the door and silently stares at him.*)

KRIVENKO (*lifting his head, gruffly*): Well, what are you staring at. Set the table.

(*The girl disappears. The muffled roar of a "Junkers" draws closer. In the blacked-out part of the stage the tommy gunner sounds the alert. A searchlight stabs the sky, a line of tracer bullets noiselessly sails over the ridge of the slope. The muffled thud of explosions. Krivenko listens intently, gets up and rapidly walks out of the dugout. Stands in the darkness looking up at the sky.*)

KRIVENKO: The dirty swine are trying to locate our positions. (*Pause*) Vassili, there are men here from the 7th Army. Run over to the field dressing station and make sure they're under cover. (*The adjutant comes running out from the dugout*) Wait a minute. The doctor is with them. Tell her to come here immediately. (*In the distance the headlights of a car, which disappear and reappear as the car takes the bends of the ravine, gradually draw closer*) Who the devil is driving here with headlights on?

(*A jeep noiselessly rolls up from behind a corner. Krivenko plays his torch on the car.*)

KRIVENKO: Kirill! (*Immediately stands at attention.*)

MURAVYEV (*jumping out of the car*): Hello, Pyotr! (*Embraces Krivenko.*)

KRIVENKO: What a relief to see you. This way. (*Laughing happily, he accompanies Muravyev to the dugout.*)

MURAVYEV (*blinking at the light, looks around him*): So this is where you've dug in?

KRIVENKO (*all smiles*): And why not. I'm just about fed up having to dash from place to place. Let them look for me here if they want me. (*Seizes Muravyev by the shoulders*) It's really you, isn't it?

MURAVYEV: It's me all right.

KRIVENKO: Nura, the wine!

MURAVYEV (*removing his greatcoat*): None for me. I'm teetotal nowadays.

KRIVENKO (*taking the coat, jokingly*): I didn't say vodka. (*Muravyev sits down. After hanging up the greatcoat, Krivenko sits beside him and for a second gazes at his friend with shining eyes*) You don't know how glad I am. . . Have you seen Liza?

MURAVYEV: No, we missed each other.

KRIVENKO (*jubilant*): Aha! Nura, set the table for three.

MURAVYEV: Why three? I want to talk with you alone.

KRIVENKO (*rubbing his hands*): Don't worry. You'll be glad when you see who it is.

(*The girl enters with a bottle of wine.*)

THE GIRL: Good evening.

MURAVYEV: Good evening. . . Please see that my driver, "Minutka", has something to eat.

KRIVENKO: What! "Minutka" here?! (*To the girl*) Haul him in. (*To Muravyev*) Well, what have you brought from Moscow? When can we expect the second front? (*Muravyev silently grins*) Oh, well, to hell with it. . . What did Comrade Stalin tell you?

MURAVYEV (*shortly*): Hold the city and smash the Germans.

KRIVENKO (*brings his fist down on the table*): Aha! Well, Kirill, for your information, we're slowly but surely giving up the city. Vinogradov is nursing his reserves; he has pinned all his hopes on his fortifications. But in his heart he has already surrendered the city. (*Losing his temper*) A defense general . . . that's what he is. Thank goodness you're here. (*Enter "Minutka"*) Hello "Minutka", the driver with the golden hands.

"MINUTKA": My respects to you, Comrade General.

KRIVENKO: Take a seat. ("*Minutka" grins from ear to ear, but remains standing*) Come, now, as if I didn't know you drink and afterwards bash my car about.

"MINUTKA": I wouldn't permit myself the liberty of drinking in the presence of a strange general.

KRIVENKO: Oh you . . . old soldier! All right then, drink by yourself. (*Pours wine into a tumbler and hands it to "Minutka".*)

"MINUTKA" (*hesitates, looks askance at Muravyev who winks at him*): To victory! (*Swallows the wine in one gulp.*)

KRIVENKO (*to the girl*): "Minutka"'s no ordinary driver. He's a general among drivers, so feed him as befits a general.

"MINUTKA": Permit me to withdraw.

KRIVENKO: Go ahead. ("*Minutka" turns about and leaves. Krivenko laughs*) The rogue. I see you haven't got rid of him yet.

MURAVYEV (*smiling*): I'd have sent him packing long ago, but where would I find another like him. He's saved my life more than once.

KRIVENKO (*abruptly returning to the subject uppermost in his mind*): Of cours Kirill, it is a fact that Klaus enjoys a co siderable superiority in men and equipmer and what's more, mobility. . . Why aren you eating? (*Pushes plates towards hir offers food*) But it's stupid to think we ca stop them by an equal dispersal of forc along the front. They are piercing the fro wherever they please. . . .

MURAVYEV (*continuing to eat*): I agre We won't get far by relying on stupid "line tactics.

KRIVENKO: Quite the opposite, we' get very far indeed. . . Maybe the oth side of the Urals! (*Jumps up*) Look her my army alone could do a lot, only let m have the divisions, especially tank division (*Brings a large map and looks for a place spread it out. Muravyev transfers his gla and plate to the stool; takes the bread fro under the map which Krivenko is impatient spreading out on the table, and calmly parta ing of food scans the map*) Look, my ide is this. To attack with all forces possibl and make up for our lack of men by rapi movement. Risky? Yes! But delay will pu us in a hopeless position. (*Muravyev studi the map. Krivenko as if remembering somethi or hearing a sound looks over his should and quickly walks to the door*) Has Vassi returned?

A VOICE: Not yet.

KRIVENKO (*in a low voice*): Send som body to the field dressing station . . . an see that he doesn't return without her. Mak it snappy! (*Returns to the table*) The iron of it, Kirill, is that the inflated figure Klaus is sweeping forward not because military skill but thanks to sheer superio ity of force. Now if we were to strike a their flank we'd smash them and send the rolling back to the "Vaterland".

MURAVYEV (*carefully moves aside th stool with the dishes, takes a serviette an after a second's silence*): I think that's exactl what we're going to do.

KRIVENKO: But when?

MURAVYEV (*looks at his watch*): Now . . this very day.

KRIVENKO (*in amazement*): You're jo ing?

MURAVYEV: Not at all. Maybe *you* we joking?

KRIVENKO (*agitatedly*): But that isn allowing any time for reserves to reach u

MURAVYEV: There will be no reserve at least not yet. (*Very quietly and gravel* Last night the Germans broke through Mikhailovka and are encircling the 7th Arm

KRIVENKO: And the army is withdra ing.

MURAVYEV (*calmly*): No. It's not wit drawing. The men are defending their po tions . . . and they're expecting you to stri at once at the German flank and at lea hold them if you can't rout them. You' got the necessary forces for the job.

KRIVENKO (*dully*): Again it mea working for nothing.

MURAVYEV (*sternly*): No, not for nothin but for victory.

(*Krivenko paces the floor.*)

KRIVENKO: Listen, Kirill, I'm a soldier nd maybe I've got things mixed up. But I loathe these Germans. I want victory for ur people, for the whole front. (*Bends down o Muravyev, passionately*) But I'll be perfectly rank with you. With every bit of me I want his to be the victory of *my* army, *my* victory, ou understand? Victory for all, but won y *my* army!

MURAVYEV (*nodding his head*): Naturally... Show me the general who doesn't covet glory. (*Laughs*) Do you think I'm any better? Only I want more than you.

KRIVENKO (*stunned*): More? And what can you promise?

MURAVYEV (*lowers his eyes, is silent and then in a cold, harsh voice*): General Krivenko, I'm here not to promise but to demand.

(*Krivenko drops his hands to his sides. Slowly approaches the map and sullenly looks at it. Pause. Again the drone of German bombers. The tommy gunner sounds the alert. A spark of light on the slope of the ravine, an angry voice in the dark: "Hey, who's messing around with a light?" A tenor voice in reply: "They're on their way back without their bomb load, so there's no harm done." "No harm! I'll knock you over the head with a spade instead of a bomb"... The roar of bombers recedes.*)

MURAVYEV (*friendly*): Why so downhearted?

KRIVENKO (*tonelessly*): What a pity... Just as I was mounting a blow that I'm certain would've saved the city. Again it means dispersing forces to "save the situation"... And then what?

MURAVYEV (*looks at Krivenko with a peculiar expression on his face, in a low, distinct voice*): The sun *will* shine in our street. That's what *he* said.

(*Krivenko throws up his head. The two silently look each other in the face. Adjutant enters.*)

ADJUTANT (*turning to Muravyev as the superior*): Allow me to report.

KRIVENKO: Well?

ADJUTANT: The medical officer of the 105th Division has left for Mikhailovka.

KRIVENKO: What? (*In a fury*) Who gave her permission? How... Who gave her a car?!

(*A colonel with a startled look appears in the doorway.*)

COLONEL: I saw her here... I assumed that the wife of the Commander of the Front....

KRIVENKO (*fiercely*): I recognize no wives here... A major reported to you. Who gave her permission to leave?

MURAVYEV (*frowning*): Keep cool. Why all this fuss because a major of the medical corps has returned to her unit. (*To the colonel*) You may leave, colonel. I'll issue an order for the car to be returned.

(*The officer leaves.*)

So Liza was here... (*Sighs*) You might've known that you couldn't stop her.

KRIVENKO (*worried*): Did you say... Mikhailovka was taken?

MURAVYEV (*shakes himself*): Yes. Now let's think how we can stop the Germans.

KRIVENKO (*goes up to the map and quickly glances over it*): All right, Kirill, I have faith in your judgement. (*Looks at his watch*) It's 5 a. m. You rest on the bed. I'll talk things over with the Chief of Staff. Tomorrow we'll strike.

(*Curtain-Map. Blue arrow of the German breakthrough encompasses Mikhailovka. Red arrow of Krivenko's counter-blow levelled to cut across blue arrow.*)

SCENE 4

General Krivenko's observation post on a height. The slope facing the audience intersected with communication passages which link different parts of O.P. On the left an open, circular trench, the motionless figure of Muravyev looking through field glasses. At his side Lavrov in the uniform of a Major-General leaning with his elbows on the parapet. Also on the left but more in the foreground, a dugout. A door on the right leads to the communication trench. General Krivenko is observing the battle through a trench periscope. His Chief of Staff is writing at a makeshift table. Intelligence officers keep coming and going. To the right of stage the dugout of the signal corps: a table, map, telephones, a telephone operator on duty. Door in the rear wall. At the base of the hill in the foreground "Minutka" sprawled out, next to him a small suitcase. The incessant rumble of artillery, the very sound of which seems charged with the heavy breathing and feverish pulse of battle, serves as the background to the outwardly calm, military drama.

KRIVENKO (*looking through the periscope, at the same time speaking into the telephone receiver*): Excellent! Excellent! Move 103... Don't worry they'll stand firm... (*To the waiting officer*) Double back to Rudenko and say I'll scalp him! (*Back to the periscope.*)

(*On the hill.*)

LAVROV: Are you sure he'll be able to do the job?

MURAVYEV (*grimly*): He won't break through.

LAVROV (*quietly*): And still you insist?

MURAVYEV (*dispassionately*): He won't achieve what he planned, but he'll do far more than he thinks. (*Worriedly*) Why is Vinogradov silent?...

(*A liaison officer dashes into the dugout and hands an envelope to the Chief of Staff.*)

CHIEF OF STAFF (*reads*): Another motorized column concentrated on the Mikhailovka highway.

KRIVENKO (*jubilant*): Aha, so they're beginning to feel the sting. Good, we'll smash them as they move up. Send the armoured tank column into action.

CHIEF OF STAFF: The last?

KRIVENKO: No, hold on! Put up an artillery barrage. (*Dashes to the exit, moves along the trench*) Where is Golosovski? Warn

the air force that I've recaptured the State farm. (*Muravyev continues to stand motionless, only lowers the field glasses*) Sir, the Germans have thrown another division into battle.

MURAVYEV: Attack, Krivenko, attack.

KRIVENKO: I've already penetrated 10 kilometres into their lines. Let me once break through to the highway and I'll turn them inside out. . . I'll bite off their wedge.

MURAVYEV: Splendid.

KRIVENKO (*pleadingly*): Just one division!

MURAVYEV: Sorry, I've already given all I can. Regroup your forces and attack.

ADJUTANT (*running up to Muravyev*): Comrade Commander, General Vinogradov on the wire. Wants you urgently.

(*Muravyev turns and rapidly descends to the communication trench, with Krivenko dashing after him.*)

KRIVENKO: The attack is being held up. They're throwing in division after division. We won't be able to break through.

MURAVYEV: Attack. *Attack.*

KRIVENKO (*quietly and passionately*): Listen, Kirill, help us out. . . Victory is at hand. . . (*Flings out his arm and points to beyond the hill*) A few fresh divisions . . . and the day is ours!

MURAVYEV (*angrily turns round*): I've ordered you to attack, haven't I? (*With a bang closes the door of the signal office behind him.*)

KRIVENKO (*passes his hand across his face*): So. . . (*Leaves.*)

MURAVYEV (*takes the receiver from the operator*): Vinogradov? . . . Yes, it's me . . . aha, the 7th! (*Listens, suddenly the expression on his face sharply changes*) What, what? Hello . . . Vinogradov! Hello! Hello! . . . (*Throws down the receiver*) Repair the line at once! (*Operator rushes out of the dugout. Muravyev to the adjutant*) Tell General Lavrov to establish radio contact with the city.

(*The adjutant runs out. Muravyev remains alone. Paces back and forth in the dugout. Seeing the half-open door, sharply retraces his footsteps to close it. It doesn't yield. Muravyev slams it with all his might, but it opens again and "Minutka" appears.*)

MURAVYEV: Close that door! (*Again starts pacing up and down.*)

(*Krivenko enters dugout.*)

CHIEF OF STAFF (*in high spirits shows a dispatch*): Pyotr Mikhailovich, things are going well! Rudenko has dislodged the S.S. troops!

KRIVENKO (*grabs hold of the dispatch*): Is that right? The devil! We'll show them! It's now or never, order the armoured column into action.

CHIEF OF STAFF (*hands the order of the day to the liaison officer; the latter dashes away*): And then?

KRIVENKO (*sits down at the table, drops his head on his arms over the map*): Wait a moment, wait, let me think. . . .

(*Muravyev still pacing the floor of the signal office. "Minutka" opens a small suitcase and offers Muravyev a sandwich.*)

MURAVYEV: Leave me alone, go to th devil!

"MINUTKA": Why should I feed the devi with sandwiches when I can eat them myself

MURAVYEV (*stopping at the door*): Wha about the line?

(*In the doorway a scared officer, behind hi the operator who takes his place at the telephone.*)

OFFICER: Comrade Commander, the dam age has been located, but as yet it's impos sible to get to the spot. Our men are tryin to crawl there but mortar fire is hamperin their movements.

MURAVYEV (*in a level voice*): I giv you five minutes or you yourself will craw to the spot!

(*Officer disappears.*)

OPERATOR (*in a strained voice repeat the call signal*): Victory. . . Victory. . Victory. . .

MURAVYEV: Stop it. . . General Kri venko.

(*The operator dashes out.*)

"MINUTKA" (*watching*): Stupid! . . . Well seeing that you won't eat. . . I'll go an see what it's all about.

MURAVYEV: Where are you off to We'll be leaving soon.

"MINUTKA": I'll be back in a minute Comrade Commander. (*Leaves the room an runs along the trench.*)

(*The operator runs to Krivenko's dugout.*

THE OPERATOR: The Commander want to see you, Comrade General.

KRIVENKO (*jumps up*): Aha, he's though better of it. (*Strides to the entrance, move swiftly along the trench and enters the signa office.*)

MURAVYEV (*silently walks over to th door and tightly closes it behind Krivenko*) The Germans have broken through to th 7th. More than a hundred tanks are racin for the city with nothing to stop them. . (*Pause. The thunder of guns overhead*) I thin they'll move this way. . . (*Goes to th map*) Look, here's what we've got to d right away.

(*The two silently bend over the map. Murav vyev explains with short jerky movements o pencil.*)

(*In the trench*):

1st OFFICER: Look, what's that jee doing out there?

2nd OFFICER: Where?

3rd OFFICER: Damn!

1st OFFICER: Look, over there, dashin out from behind the hillock tearing at to speed into the line of fire.

2nd OFFICER: Sure enough. He mus be mad? . . . And the Germans are silen

3rd OFFICER: They're too bewildered There goes. Their mortars are opening up

1st OFFICER: My God, he's made it!

2nd OFFICER: Aha . . . they've got him (*With a wave of the hand*) A bloody mess.

1st OFFICER: Nothing of the kind. . There's the jeep burning and racing throug the smoke.

3rd OFFICER: Look, look, somebody's mped out.

1st OFFICER: You're imagining things. *Heaves a sigh*) The car's in smithereens.

3rd OFFICER: I could swear I saw a man mp out, run a bit and then drop.

1st OFFICER: If there was anybody he's ere no longer. The Germans are plastering e whole area.

Pause. The officers peer into the distance. Explosions suddenly stop.)

2nd OFFICER: It's all over.

1st OFFICER (*collecting his thoughts*): ut what was it? A nightmare? (*All three art talking; move into the background.*)

(*In the signal office*):

KRIVENKO (*straightening himself*): Very ell! I'll strike here and hammer away as ng as I've got anything to hit with. But ow . . . will you give me reserves?

MURAVYEV: No, not yet. . . (*After n agonizing internal struggle*) That's some- ing I can't decide on now.

KRIVENKO (*quietly, with burning eyes*): ou know . . . It seems to me I'm going ad. I seem to think that it is Vinogradov ho is talking to me and not you.

MURAVYEV (*sharply turns*): You'll kindly emember who is talking to you!

KRIVENKO: Yes, sir. (*Strides out of the ugout and passes along the trench.*)

MURAVYEV (*goes to the telephone*): Vic- ory. . . Victory. . . (*Flings down the eceiver, swiftly moves to the entrance and ens the door*) Is Lavrov at the field radio tation? I'll be there. (*Disappears.*)

(*Operator dashes in, sits down at the telephone.*)

OPERATOR: Victory. . . Victory. . . ictory. . . .

(*Krivenko flings open the door of his dugout. He is seething with excitement.*)

CHIEF OF STAFF (*joyfully*): He's given ou the reserves? I can tell by your face.

KRIVENKO: You can say good-bye to ur daydreams. I'm off and maybe shan't eturn. You remain here and keep up the ttacks. I'll take most of the men with me— handful will stay here with you.

CHIEF OF STAFF (*in dismay*): What hall I attack with?

KRIVENKO (*sharply*): Well, if you don't ttack. . . The Germans will and they'll rush you. Come along, I'll explain on the ay. (*The two leave.*)

(*In the signal office*):

OPERATOR (*tonelessly*): Victory. . . Victory. . . Victory. . . .

(*Enter Muravyev and Lavrov.*)

LAVROV: In addition we've managed to repair 40 tanks in the factories. But we haven't enough men to make up the crews. Have enrolled factory workers. Will see just what's what on the spot.

MURAVYEV: Excellent. Mine all approaches and if time runs out put up smokescreens to mislead the enemy.

OPERATOR: Victory. . . Victory. . . (*Joyfully*) We're through!

MURAVYEV (*snatches the receiver*): Vinogradov? Yes . . . it's me . . . yes . . . yes . . . Be brief . . . Lavrov is leaving now to contact him. Who else is in the city? . . . Just a minute. (*To Lavrov*) Off you go at once. German tanks are moving up to the northern outskirts. General Panteleyev is in the city, he'll give you a hand. Well, Comrade Lavrov, for the next few hours you hold in your hands not only the fate of the city. . . (*The two men shake hands*) Only, hold out until the regular units come up.

(*Lavrov leaves. Muravyev speaking into the receiver*): Yes, I'm listening. . . It's all right, Krivenko's attacking, he's drawn off three divisions already and he'll draw off more. . . Dispatch a unit to cover the river. . . You've done that already? Splendid. In the meantime use the city's anti-aircraft guns, every one of them against the tanks. Yes, yes, I'll be there right away! (*Replaces the receiver, looks around him*) "Minutka"!

(*Door opens. Leaning against it heavily is "Minutka"—his face and hands scorched and streaked with blood, his uniform in tatters. Supporting himself against the door he staggers to the threshold.*)

"MINUTKA" (*hoarsely*): Here I am . . . connected the line . . . smashed the car. (*Collapses on the threshold.*)

MURAVYEV (*bends down and immediately straightens himself*): The lad is to be saved at all costs. (*Steps over the body of "Minutka", strides along the trench. In a loud, imperious voice*) A car and the best driver you've got.

(*Curtain. The curtain-map shows the line of the front pierced and shifted back by the Germans. Blue arrow juts into the city—Krivenko's counter-maneuvre indicated by red arrow.*)

SCENE 5

Front H. Q. transferred across river. Commander's cabinet. On the left small reception room. In right-hand corner of rear wall private room of commander. Gunfire like a faint trembling rumble heard occasionally in distance. Muravyev, excited, comes striding in. Sergeyev is reporting.

MURAVYEV: Don't worry. Krivenko's attacking.

SERGEYEV: The survivors of the 105th have broken through encirclement.

MURAVYEV: Yes, yes. . . .

SERGEYEV: Colonel Voronkov is here to see you; he's brought the documents and personal belongings of your wife.

MURAVYEV: What! (*Abruptly turns round and goes into his room.*)

(*Vinogradov enters with a sheet of paper in his hand.*)

VINOGRADOV: What. . . You've already broken the news?

(*Sergeyev nodding, leaves. Liaison officer dashes in.*)

LIAISON OFFICER: I've been ordered by the Commander of the 7th to report personally to the Commander of the front.

VINOGRADOV: In the meantime report to me. Please, this way. (*In a low voice*). The Commander has just been informed of the death of his wife. (*They leave.*)

(*Muravyev slowly enters holding a package of papers and photographs. Behind him is the Commander of the 105th Division, Voronkov. Muravyev heavily sits down in an armchair, places papers on table and motionlessly stares at men in the room.*)

VORONKOV (*in low voice*): When our troops withdrew, Elizaveta Mikhailovna remained behind. I dispatched an officer with instructions to return with her immediately. She turned her documents over to the officer and sent a message saying she'd leave with the last car. I sent the officer again, this time with a jeep. He failed to return. We checked with all the ambulances as they came in—she wasn't in any of them. The last person to see her reported that she stayed behind to billet the heavily wounded in the village homes and indicated she would catch up with us on a jeep. (*Pause*) When we broke through to the area we came across a smashed jeep . . . evidently a hand grenade had been used . . . there were pools of blood . . . but no trace of a body. . . .

MURAVYEV: What else have you?

VORONKOV: Of her things?

MURAVYEV (*brusquely*): I'm asking about the division. What was the situation when you withdrew the division?

VORONKOV (*hurriedly*): Lost up to 60 per cent of the men; but managed to save the bulk of the equipment.

MURAVYEV: Where are the men billeted?

VORONKOV: In the fishermen's houses.

(*Vinogradov enters cabinet. Stops.*)

MURAVYEV: You've earned a rest . . . but you're quartered closest to the breakthrough. . . Better get the men into lorries and transfer them to the city, to the factories. Report there to Chief of Operations.

VORONKOV. Yes, sir.

(*Voronkov leaves. Muravyev continues to stare at the package. Vinogradov discreetly approaches him.*)

VINOGRADOV (*gently*): Kirill Stepanovich. I understand . . . your feelings. I hesitate to trouble you now. . . .

MURAVYEV (*blood rushes to his face, he bangs his fist on the desk*): Stop it. . . (*Panting*) Don't waste time. . . (*Pulls out desk drawer, places wife's papers in it and closes it*) Report!

VINOGRADOV (*displaying no surprise or resentment*): An officer has just arrived by plane from Studentsov. The entire 7th Army front has been hurled back to the north of the city. This means that only the workers' battalions are holding that section. There is no contact with the city, but our information is that the Germans have already entered it.

MURAVYEV: Please forgive me, Vladimir Vikentyevich. (*Pause*) Maybe we have stretched the point, after all. Have you informed the commanders of the reser armies?

VINOGRADOV: Yes. The conference h been fixed for 00.30.

MURAVYEV (*unbelievably*): Surely th cannot be the end. . . .

VINOGRADOV (*moved*): Kirill Stepan vich, this is the eleventh hour. . . Unfo tunately, things have turned out as I foresa but if the city must be held. . . As y know I rarely see eye to eye with Gener Krivenko, but he's right—only by sac ficing the strategic reserves can we save t day . . . that is, if it's still possible.

MURAVYEV (*turning his head quietly*) Good. Maybe you're right. . . But ju make sure that that dispatch tallies wi the facts.

(*Lights go out. The triumphant blaring a brass band, wild clamour of crowds, frenzi voice of speaker, German phrases. . . . Lights go up. The same room at midnigh Motionless group of generals who have arriv to attend conference. Next to radio set one them is quietly translating scraps of the Germa broadcast. A tall cavalry general morose paces floor stopping now and again to liste to translator.*)

TRANSLATOR: The city has fallen. . The frantic resistance of the Bolsheviks h been crushed after many weeks of bloo battles.

(*Silence. Staccato German speech.*)

CAVALRY GENERAL (*stopping in h tracks*): Well . . . what else are they barki about? . . .

TRANSLATOR: The armies of Gener Klaus have captured one of the last bastio of the Russian defense.

(*A renewed clamour, singing, strident blari of band. The cavalry general strides over the radio set and disconnects it. . . En Sergeyev.*)

SERGEYEV: The conference may delayed. The Commander has been summon to the signal office by Supreme Headquarte

(*Tense silence. Sergeyev walks up to the caval general.*)

SERGEYEV (*in a low voice*): He'll removed, I imagine.

GENERAL (*looking askance, glumly*): Bei removed's nothing. What's really terrib is the talk that precedes it.

SERGEYEV: Hm. . . I can just imagi what Supreme Headquarters will have say. . . .

(*Adjutant looks into room.*)

ADJUTANT (*excitedly*): Comrade Lavr has arrived from the city.

(*Lavrov swiftly walks in followed by Pan leyev.*)

LAVROV (*discarding his greatcoat*): So so good. We're still holding out. . . (*Poi ing to Panteleyev*) Thanks to him. But m of the credit goes to Krivenko.

(*Lavrov is surrounded; only scattered wo heard: ". . . broke through" . . . ". . . linked with the 105th . . ." "Krivenko . . ." Gen als detaching themselves from group g enthusiastic expression to their approva

"What a man!"

"Who knows what the outcome would have been had it not been for Krivenko's manoeuvre."

"The outcome's still undecided—the Germans are in the city."

CAVALRY GENERAL (*puffing at his cigarette*): Bravo Krivenko!

SERGEYEV (*going up to him for a light*): He's the candidate for his position.

CAVALRY GENERAL: Whom do you mean by "his"?

VOICE: Why, the Commander!

All fall silent and stand at attention. Muravyev walks direct to the table followed by Vinogradov who is lost in thought and Studentsov, Commander of the 7th, who is visibly crushed by his Army's defeat.)

MURAVYEV: Please be seated.

Generals sit down. Vinogradov and Lavrov seated on either side of Muravyev. Adjutant leans towards Muravyev holding a folder.)

ADJUTANT: Comrade Commander, the men have arrived from their units, as ordered, to receive their decorations.

MURAVYEV: This is hardly the time for handing out decorations.

LAVROV (*in a low but insistent voice*): Personally I think it is. Responsibility for the situation is ours: they've done their job.

MURAVYEV: Are these their records? (*Takes the folder, examines it and then to Vinogradov*) Please report on the situation; I want to hear the opinion of all gathered.

VINOGRADOV (*unfolding the plan of the city on table*): For more than 10 hours the workers' battalions repulsed the tanks that penetrated to the northern outskirts of the city. Just as the Germans forced the withdrawal of the 7th to the North and rushed infantry into the gap. . . .

STUDENTSOV (*getting up from his seat*): Permit me to explain, sir.

MURAVYEV (*ironically*): Do you think that would improve matters?

(*Studentsov sits down.*)

VINOGRADOV (*continuing*): Just then the 305th arrived on the scene; the long-range artillery, concentrated on the East bank by front H.Q., opened up and impeded the enemy's progress. True, the enemy was already in the city, having reached the circular road and the factory area.

PANTELEYEV: Yes, the gully. . . .

VINOGRADOV (*looks at Panteleyev thinking he'll continue, but the latter relapses into silence*): Finally, the decisive factor was the non-stop attacks by Krivenko's 21st Army. His troops got through to the city, moved into the area of the breach and are now holding the Germans there.

(*Krivenko strides into the reception room followed by his adjutant.*)

ADJUTANT (*pleadingly*): Allow me to change the bandage, you can't. . . .

KRIVENKO: Later. (*To adjutant on duty*) When did the conference start?

ADJUTANT: At 00.30 to the minute.

(*Krivenko enters cabinet.*)

KRIVENKO (*standing at attention*): A thousand apologies for being late; I was held up by the Germans.

MURAVYEV (*smiling*): You held up the Germans and for that we'll excuse you. (*To Vinogradov*) Continue.

VINOGRADOV: We must now avail ourselves of the respite afforded by General Krivenko's success and soberly weigh the situation. (*Krivenko is visibly excited. He tries to listen, after a while impatiently writes a note and has it passed on to Muravyev. The latter, after reading it nods his head*) The grave situation in the city, the position of the 21st Army which is in danger of being forced back to the river, call for a number of urgent measures in the event of possible disaster. I've already drawn up an order requisitioning all barges, cutters. . . .

MURAVYEV: Have you ascertained who circulated the panicky and false report about the fall of the city?

VINOGRADOV: Yes. . . But I would qualify it as an inaccurate. . . .

MURAVYEV: Remove him and have him tried. Is there anything else you wish to add?

VINOGRADOV: No. (*Sits down.*)

KRIVENKO (*jumps up*): Allow me. . . The 21st Army rejects this reserve of transports and barges.

VINOGRADOV (*heatedly*): The courage of a military leader is not displayed in reckless gallantry but in the ability to dispassionately appraise the situation and I have taken upon myself this heavy responsibility.

KRIVENKO (*with icy calm*): There is no need for me to argue. The situation itself proves who was right and what's got to be done. It is now clear that only an immediate blow by our combined forces can save the city.

VINOGRADOV: What forces?

KRIVENKO (*with a gesture*): Here in front of me are three generals. Their intact armies are adequate for the job of dislodging the Germans from the city. I'm not informed about the plans of the High Command. But it's clear that reserves are being massed for a counter-blow, it's also clear to me that any plan for an offensive will be worthless if we surrender the city.

MURAVYEV (*beckons to Sergeyev, hands him a sheet of paper with the names of the men decorated*): Call them in. (*To Panteleyev*) Did you say . . . a gully?

PANTELEYEV: Just so. (*Coughs, gets up*) I'll take the liberty of indulging in a paradox. It's deplorable . . . but actually in letting the Germans into the city we gain a defense citadel. (*Panteleyev himself seems surprised at this*) The Germans have the upper hand in tanks but here in the city they lose the element of tank maneuvre. (*Shaking his head*) It's regrettable but precisely this destruction of blocks of buildings will add immensely to the strength of our position! By surrendering Paris without battle the French lost an irreplaceable anti-tank position.

VINOGRADOV (*in a tired voice*): But this isn't Paris. We are discussing a narrow strip of ruins under fire from all sides.

PANTELEYEV (*nodding his head*): Exactly. This is not Paris! It takes a Russian to make such a sacrifice.

GENERAL: And what about the rear?

PANTELEYEV: Hm, the rear. Well, if you were to take a stroll along the river bank, say from the blue kiosk, you'd see that the bank is high and steep forming a sort of dead spot in the line of fire, which could be used to quarter staffs, reserves and even for maneuvring along the front. True, we'd be somewhat cramped for space, but it could be done.

KRIVENKO: Time is flying and here we're discussing a decisive battle as if it were a matter of moving into an apartment.

PANTELEYEV: True, true. I was merely trying to show that if necessary it could be done. (*Sits down.*)

(*Krivenko stands up. Just then Lieutenant Fyodorov walks in accompanied by Sergeyev. The lieutenant presents the appearance of a scorched tree.*)

LIEUTENANT: Lieutenant Fyodorov at your service, sir!

MURAVYEV (*gets up from his seat and walks up to the lieutenant*): You've been decorated for your heroic defense of house No. 48. Allow me to congratulate you. (*Shakes his hand, in dry harsh voice*) But that's by no means the end. . . Every house will now decide the fate of the city, of the entire front. I warn you that you'll be held responsible, even shot, if you surrender the house.

LIEUTENANT: Comrade Commander, I can be held responsible as long as I'm on the spot. Would you please give instructions that I'm not to be called to H.Q. unless absolutely necessary.

MURAVYEV (*drops his head, smiles, and in a soft warm voice*): Things are pretty tough, my friend. And I can't promise you they're going to be any easier within the near future. Things will be even more difficult. . . But today Stalin said to me: "At all costs—hold the city." I ask you, your men, what shall we answer him?

LIEUTENANT (*with gruff intensity*): We're staying out . . . There's no room for us on the other bank.

MURAVYEV (*gripping his hand*): I shall convey your message to Stalin. You may leave. (*Follows lieutenant with his eyes*) There's an officer for you, a man who will never be shot. He'll die a hero even if he fails to carry out his assignment. This privilege is denied our commanders in chief. (*Walks to the table, sits down. To Vinogradov*) Cancel the order to be issued in the event of the city being abandoned. That will never occur.

VINOGRADOV: Yes, sir.

MURAVYEV: General Studentsov. (*The latter jumps to attention*) Your job is at all costs to hold the area still in your hands on the west bank, on the German flank or . . . you'll be held responsible. (*Weighing his words*) The 21st Army is charged with the defense of the city.

KRIVENKO (*getting up*): Sir, if things remain as before . . . I cannot vouch for the fate of the city.

MURAVYEV: Lieutenant-General Panteleyev you will take over command of the 21st Army.

(*Pause*)

KRIVENKO (*in amazement*): Are yo removing me? . . As a commander who ha failed in his duty?

MURAVYEV: No, as an individual wh may fail. (*Gets up. The rest follow suit*) Yo General Panteleyev, member of the Mili tary Council Lavrov, and Colonel Sergeye will remain behind.

(*The generals silently bow and leave. Kri venko after a second's hesitation is the last t depart.*)

MURAVYEV (*to the generals who hav remained behind*): Please step into my cabin et. I'll join you shortly. (*Lavrov and Pante leyev withdraw. Muravyev calls out*) Pyotr (*Krivenko continues on his way*) Genera Krivenko!

(*Krivenko sharply turns round and stands a attention. Muravyev slowly walks up to him.*

MURAVYEV: You wanted to stay wit me for a while, didn't you? (*Krivenko offer no reply. Muravyev lowers his head and i a gentle voice*) Pyotr, tell me, do you kno what has happened?

KRIVENKO (*irreconcilable*): Comrade Com mander, permit me to leave to get the woun dressed that I received while at my post a Commander of the 21st Army.

MURAVYEV: You're wounded? (*Kri venko without replying looks straight over hi head*) You may go. (*Turns round and rapidl walks back to his cabinet.*)

(*Krivenko holding himself upright slowl turns, takes a few laboured steps and suddenl staggering, supports himself on the doorpos He is all alone for a second. Sergeyev walkin swiftly comes out of Muravyev's cabinet.*

SERGEYEV (*surprised*): Pyotr Mikha lovich!

KRIVENKO (*hoarsely*): Curse that wound.. Why didn't I . . . change the bandage Everything here's (*places hand on ches* soaked in blood.

SERGEYEV (*supporting him*): Come alon to my place and rest for the night. . . We' dress your wound there . . . I think a drin wouldn't hurt you now.

KRIVENKO: All right. . . Yes, I' have a drink. Only . . . (*straightens himse and pushes Sergeyev aside*) I'm going bac to bid farewell to the Army. (*Crosses t threshold into the anteroom*) My car!

SERGEYEV: But Pyotr Mikhailovic you can't possibly travel another 30 kil metres without changing that bandage.

KRIVENKO: I tell you I'm going back . . must get back to my army (*To his adjutar* Quick!

(*Adjutant runs in. Mustering his remaini strength Krivenko tries to retain his balanc*

SERGEYEV (*softly*): What's going to ha pen, Pyotr Mikhailovich? Here we've be hoping that he'd have something to tell u Instead. . . There's nothing to him and lo at the trick he played on you.

KRIVENKO (*gruffly*): The decision's a nounced and that's that.

SERGEYEV: Won't you come over my place after all. . . All right then. I off. (*Leaves.*)

(*Krivenko clutches at his chest, looks rou stumbles to the table and takes carafe w

water. Panteleyev hurriedly walks out of Muravyev's room. Krivenko pours water into glass, reels, clutches edge of table; tries to unbutton his tunic, slowly slumps down. Panteleyev runs to his assistance and seats him in a chair.)

PANTELEYEV: Good heavens you're covered with blood. . . .

KRIVENKO (*recognizing him*): Oh, it's you . . . (*Tries to stand up*) We'll be leaving right away. Must hand over . . . the Army.

PANTELEYEV: Well, yes, of course, but first of all my boy. . . (*Adjutant on duty and Krivenko's adjutant enter, the latter carrying the general's greatcoat*) Help me carry him to the couch. . . Easy, easy. . . Fetch the doctor quick . . . bring hot water and scissors. (*To Krivenko's adjutant*) Put the greatcoat under his head. That's right. (*Unbuttons Krivenko's jacket.*)

(*Lavrov and Vinogradov come out attracted by the noise.*)

KRIVENKO (*delirious*): I surrender. . . (*Suddenly with superhuman effort sits up*) Don't dare surrender the city! (*Falls back*) But how'll you hold it. . . .

PANTELEYEV (*supporting him and gently laying him down*): I'll hold it, old man, I'll hold it. . . .

(*Muravyev stands in the doorway of his room. Adjutant returns with doctor and medical personnel.*)

PANTELEYEV (*looking over his shoulder*): That's better, now you'll be alright. . . (*To Krivenko's adjutant*) Are you from the 7th? . . .

ADJUTANT: Yes, sir.

PANTELEYEV: Right, we shall leave immediately.

(*The two leave the room.*)

MURAVYEV (*softly*): Take him to my room in the meantime.

LAVROV: Lift him together with the couch.

(*Couch is carefully lifted and carried to Muravyev's room. Muravyev is now alone. Lavrov returns, followed by Vinogradov.*)

LAVROV: Kirill Stepanovich. . . If you deemed it necessary to change the command there was no need to do it as you did. (*Muravyev is silent*) You've hurt him, undeservedly so, and in front of everybody. . . Krivenko is very popular with the army; the men have faith in him.

MURAVYEV: If General Krivenko has no faith in our holding the city then it's better that they should have no faith in General Krivenko.

LAVROV (*leaving*): Well, maybe . . . still, you think it over . . . I'm off now to the city.

(*Leaves.*)

MURAVYEV (*walks over to the couch*): Vladimir Vikentyevich, recommend Krivenko for decoration for a brilliantly executed operation. (*In official tone*) That's all. (*Vinogradov continues to stand silent. Muravyev, utterly exhausted sinks down on the couch and covers his eyes with his hand.*)

VINOGRADOV (*softly*): Kirill Stepanovich. . . I take it for granted that everything you said today was likewise meant for my benefit. Why then didn't you draw the necessary conclusions?

(*Pause*)

MURAVYEV (*without opening his eyes*): Vladimir Vikentyevich, have you ever given a thought to what it's going to be like after the war? How we're going to live?

VINOGRADOV: No . . . I'm already old and all alone. I had an only son and I gave him to the war. No, I never think about myself or about the future.

MURAVYEV (*absent-mindedly*): What was that you were saying?

VINOGRADOV: Yes, my opinion is that if we withdraw from the city the river could be used as a powerful defense line behind which it would be easier for us to hold the front. . . (*Falls silent and then with an effort*) Assuming we don't hold the city, what then . . . I dread to think about the useless sacrifice. . . .

MURAVYEV (*opens his eyes and intently stares at Vinogradov*): So, you think we've lost the war?

VINOGRADOV (*sharply*): I never said that! (*Firmly and with dignity*) We've already won the war, but the absence of a second front is the cause of the present situation and only a second front can solve it. Sooner or later there will be a second front. . . You know whose words I'm quoting.

MURAVYEV (*nodding his head*): As always you're right.

VINOGRADOV: Then, having preserved the army, we'd recapture the city and move forward.

MURAVYEV (*indifferently*): Tailing behind the allies?

(*Vinogradov lowers his head in silence.*)

MURAVYEV: So you see it's just too bad you're not thinking about the future. We haven't only got to win the war; the peace has to be won also. . . My dear Vladimir Vikentyevich! It's easy to remove and transfer any one of us to another place where we can contribute more. Krivenko is right, and so are you in your way. . . The Germans and even many of our friends all over the world, and for that matter many people here, think in the depths of their hearts that it's impossible to hold our ground on this side of the river. And yet, one man has decided that it can and must be done. (*Thinks for a minute*) Any able commander can correctly appraise a given situation and outline the measures to be taken accordingly. (*Slowly and distinctly*) But it takes a genuine strategist to set the task and himself create the situation he needs. (*Gets up*) And we have only one such strategist.

VINOGRADOV: True. (*Tensely waits*) But I don't quite understand, you've left something unsaid? What is it you want to say?

(*Muravyev sharply changes, goes up to Vinogradov and with suppressed vigour.*)

MURAVYEV: What I'm going to tell you now is strictly confidential. Only you and the handful of men selected to work with you will know about it. (*Stops, slowly*) I'm referring to the general plan of the Supreme Command.

Curtain.

ACT 3

SCENE 6

Panteleyev's H.Q. Smoke-blackened, damp basement with low brick arches. In the left corner of the rear wall a door with a few steps leading up to it. Right back an archway boarded up, with a door leading to office.

To the left in the foreground a tiny closet separated from the basement by plywood partition, with groundsheet serving as door. On the makeshift table telephones, notebooks, a smoking paraffin lamp; on the wall a mirror.

At the entrance to the closet a tiny iron stove on which a kettle is boiling. A girl in uniform is busy feeding the stove with wood; behind the stove a neatly-made bed, next to it a tommy gun; on the stool next to the bed a hand grenade. In the center of the stage an ordinary table, on it a lamp with a green shade. At the table Panteleyev is stirring a cup of tea. He is wearing a cap, a quilted jacket over his uniform and felt boots. Sitting at side of the table is his Chief of Staff. Incessant muffled roaring of guns, but when door opens gunfire roars like a fire when the stove is opened.

CHIEF OF STAFF (*gloomily examining the map*): They are slicing up our defense . . . like sausage . . . easier to swallow that way. . . The 105th is completely cut off. We've only the river left for transporting supplies, the wounded and maintaining contact. And what'll happen when the ice starts moving? Why, it'll be quite impossible then.

PANTELEYEV: True, my friend, it seems impossible, but there's no giving up. Hm . . . suppose we make another try at cutting a corridor to them?

CHIEF OF STAFF (*nearly in despair*): Look, Ivan Anisimovich, if they couldn't hold their ground, surely they're going to find it even more difficult to get the Germans out. What's more, it's a question of a mere strip of land, is it worth while. . . .

PANTELEYEV (*heatedly*): Strip of land? And how many such strips have we? Stop snivelling. Milksop! (*Angrily*) And for heaven's sake don't go off in a huff—I'm an old man.

(*The door opens. Lieutenant Fyodorov wet from head to toe steps in.*)

LIEUTENANT (*salutes and hands over package*): Package from the commander of the 105th Division.

PANTELEYEV: Boat sunk? (*Carefully shakes wet package then opens it*) Warm yourself by the stove. Shurochka, a glass of vodka.

LIEUTENANT: The cutter slipped through to the other bank all right, but on the way back was spotted right in the middle.

(*The girl brings a glass of vodka. Lieutenant, without looking at her takes the glass and gulps down the vodka. The girl watches him with glad smile. He recognizes the traffic girl; for the first time the semblance of a smile touches his blackened lips.*)

LIEUTENANT (*softly*): You? . . . here now?

GIRL (*smiling joyfully and also softly*): Recognized me? . . . Yes, I'm here. . . We've got no roads left now. . . .

LIEUTENANT (*with grim tenderness*): Well . . . Do you cry here?

(*With an embarrassed smile she again lifts her shining eyes to him and then returns to the stove. Squatting down she fusses around the stove with wood.*)

PANTELEYEV (*handing over the documents to the Chief of Staff*): I seem to recall. . . You defended house No. 48.

LIEUTENANT: I'm still defending it.

PANTELEYEV (*knitting his brows*): If I remember correctly, on the second floor there's a window facing the cinema. 'twould be a good place for a machine-gun. . . Cross fire from there. . . .

LIEUTENANT: It's already there.

PANTELEYEV: The cinema should be dynamited . . . and a gun stationed behind the corner of the side street.

LIEUTENANT: The building's blown up all right, but there are no guns.

PANTELEYEV: So. Do you know what that building was? . . . Used to be front H. Q. Yes . . . (*Musingly*) The Commander of the Front used to say to me: "You're afraid the Germans will enter the city?" To which I'd reply: "No, I'm not afraid, they'll get no further than this house . . ." So you see, you are now defending the honour of the whole front.

LIEUTENANT (*brusquely*): We'd defend any Soviet building in the same way.

PANTELEYEV (*nodding his head*): You're a brave officer . . . You know how to fight, how to answer . . . and, how to swim.

LIEUTENANT: I can't swim, Comrade Commander.

PANTELEYEV: Hm . . . All the same you'll never go under. (*To the Chief of Staff*) You see, Vassili Petrovich, they're holding their own! That means the Division can do likewise.

LIEUTENANT: That's what the Division is doing.

PANTELEYEV: Write the following order for the morning, my lad . . . we're going to hack a corridor. (*Again looks at the lieutenant, with a heavy sigh*) Of course the right thing would be to give you a chance to dry yourself and get some sleep. . . Hm. . . But, I'm afraid you'll have to double back to the Division right away. . . .

(*Thunder of guns. Commandant of H. Q. comes running in.*)

COMMANDANT (*hurriedly*): Comrad Commander, German tommy gunners hav wriggled through. . . They're plastering u

with grenades from the ravine. (*Runs to the rchway*) All to action stations! (*To Pantelyev*) Comrade Commander, I suggest you away from here for a while.

(*Men come running out from neighbouring ooms testing their guns on the run. The girl ives behind curtain, puts on a helmet, fixes er hair, mechanically looks into the mirror, icks up tommy gun and running in her heavy boots, joins the men.*)

PANTELEYEV (*regretfully*): Vladimir Petovich, see what's doing out there . . . and ome right back. We'll continue where we eft off.

(*The commandant dashes out, followed by the Chief of Staff.*)

LIEUTENANT: Allow me sir, to go with he men.

PANTELEYEV: All right, my lad, go ead while we prepare the order of the day. (*After him*) Take a tommy gun and hand grenades. . . You'll find them near the bed.

(*The door is closed but the frequent thuds of explosions are heard. Panteleyev, nonchalantly rs his tea. With other hand he slowly pulls t a revolver from his pocket and places it on e table. . . Telephone buzzes. He gets up nd walks to the booth. Picks up the receiver.*)

No, this isn't Shurochka. Panteleyev peaking. (*Grumbling*) Shurochka is busy elting enemy tommy gunners with hand renades. . . That's all right, I understand. . . Go ahead I'll take it down myself. (*Takes a pencil and starts writing in notebook*) Thirty tanks in the course of the day? . . That sure is good news, my friend. . . So. . . So. . . (*Frowns, grunts, throws down the pencil*) Inform the colonel that General Panteleyev has heard nothing about the station. When it's recaptured then let him report. (*Firmly replaces the receiver.*)

(*Thunder of guns. Chief of Staff returns, pressing a blood-stained handkerchief to his cheek. In his haste, leaves the door open.*)

PANTELEYEV: You're wounded. Look my lad, the first-aid outfit's in Shura's corner.

CHIEF OF STAFF: It's nothing, just a scratch from a flying splinter. . . The air is full of them. (*Wiping his cheek, alarmed*) Ivan Anisimovich, they're attacking simultaneously in the outskirts of the city and in the factory area. . . The station is also under fire. . . It looks as if the all-out attack is being launched. . . .

PANTELEYEV (*knitting his brows and standing in the middle of the basement*): So what, everybody's at their posts . . . and this isn't the first time. (*Looking towards the door*) Please close the door, my friend, there's a draught.

(*Curtain. The map on the curtain shows only a narrow strip of land along the river, and the "pockets" of the isolated divisions.*)

SCENE 7

Commander's office. Setting the same as in Scene 5, the only difference being that big maps ered with white sheets of paper are hanging on all walls. Two officers are busy covering the last up with paper and there's a glimpse of a map thickly intersected with lines and arrows... A similar up is spread out on the long conference table. Vinogradov is watching the officers at work. The men n the office move about noiselessly and silently.

Chief of Intelligence Department strides into anteroom. Before the adjutant can stop him he s at the door of the office which he tries to open. It is locked. Vinogradov, assured that the map is overed, turns the key and opens the door.

VINOGRADOV: Hush. . . The commander is resting before the conference.

CHIEF OF INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT (*excitedly, in an undertone*): He must be wakened. . . (*The officers withdraw. The two converse in an undertone, excitedly*) I've interviewed partisans from the Mikhailovka district. It appears they got through the lines together with the doctor of the 105th Division. . . And she has rejoined the 105th.

VINOGRADOV (*thunder-struck*): Do you think it's. . . Impossible, surely she'd have come here with them or, at least would've sent a note.

CHIEF OF INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT: But they didn't tell her they were going to Front H.Q. And she couldn't phone right away from the 105th. There's no direct contact with the Division, only with Panteleyev and even then via the river.

VINOGRADOV: Oh, my friend, if only. . . But it seems so improbable.

CHIEF OF INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT (*reluctantly*): There's just this. . . She's been so many days with the partisans and yet never once mentioned that she was the Commander's wife. . . I questioned them, but they say she never said a word about it.

VINOGRADOV: If that's the case, I regard it as proof positive. That's just like her. (*Excitedly*) Come along! This surely is reason enough to wake him. (*Stops in doubt*) No . . . better verify it. Because to lose her a second time. . . Let's contact Panteleyev. (*Quickly leaves.*)

(*For a while the stage is empty. Muravyev enters. His army jacket is unbuttoned. He obviously couldn't sleep. Takes a look at the walls, crosses the room in deep thought. Stops at the radio set, twirls the knobs. Suddenly the Kremlin chimes ring out. Muravyev stands motionless and listens as the clock strikes twelve.*)

MURAVYEV (*shakes his head*): Yes. (*Suddenly listens and in amazement walks to the door*) Come in, come right in! I've been expecting you . . . for a long time. . . (*General Krivenko morosely crosses the threshold*) Has the wound healed?

KRIVENKO (*without looking at him, crosses to the writing desk, picks up a batch of German magazines*) Pictures? Old issues.

MURAVYEV: What, not interesting? (*Laughs*) Here's von Klaus, the conqueror of Belgium and the hero of Dunkirk.

KRIVENKO: Are you preparing for your own Dunkirk?

MURAVYEV: Yes, but with a different sequel.

KRIVENKO (*aimlessly turning pages of magazine*): I walked in, there was nobody . . . and where's "Minutka"?

MURAVYEV (*in low voice*): "Minutka" died.

KRIVENKO: He, too . . . (*Pause, softly*) Forgive me . . . I didn't know at the time that Liza had died.

MURAVYEV: There was a lot more you didn't know, otherwise you'd have understood.

(*Pause*)

KRIVENKO: I've come to talk with you . . . not as a general, but as a friend. May I?

MURAVYEV: Yes.

KRIVENKO (*in muffled voice*): I believed in you . . . but you yourself have no idea how many times you deprived me of what I've treasured most and . . . destroyed it.

MURAVYEV: I know.

KRIVENKO (*passionately*): No, you're not a friend! I can't and won't be sorry for you.

MURAVYEV: Very well then. Let's talk as one Communist to another.

KRIVENKO (*excited, walks over to the window*): All right! I don't want to talk about myself; I've nothing left now. (*Is silent, restraining himself, in suppressed voice*) For a month I was laid up and waited. My soul ached, *not* my wound. What have you achieved in this past month?

MURAVYEV: We've held the city.

KRIVENKO (*turns round, his eyes flash sombrely*): I've been in there and had a look at the map. . . There's no city. All you've got is a narrow strip of land and ruins fringing the river. Some of the units are actually encircled. This can't be endured much longer!

MURAVYEV (*flares up*): Shut up! (*Angrily jumps up*) A position like this cannot be held by orders, the men are sticking it because *they're* determined to hold on to the end. The people have commanded us to hold the city.

KRIVENKO (*in cold fury*): Yes, it is they and not you who have worked this miracle and it would be criminal to surrender the city now. . . But that's just what's being done slowly and surely. This would never have happened had you thrown in all forces at the time!

MURAVYEV (*mockingly*): Von Klaus dreamed of our doing exactly that.

KRIVENKO (*wrathfully*): You're joking?!

MURAVYEV: Listen. (*Takes a sheet of paper from the table*) Here's Hitler's secret order of the day, dated October 14th. (*Reads*) ". . . The Russians, whose forces have been drained as a result of recent battles, will not be able to repeat the bitter winter of 1941." (*Throws down the paper, exasperated*) Klaus is trying to force us into doing this and you, you think that it's your offensive genius!

KRIVENKO (*in an agony of incomprehension*): But what are you waiting for? After all, there's a limit to human endurance. . . What have you decided?

MURAVYEV: To stand to the end! And it's not me that's decided on this but the people and... (*Resolutely walks to the long table, gradually removes white sheets of paper from the map*) Look! It is more terrible than ever you imagine. . . Here are 22 German divisions piled into a narrow strip of ruins along the river which is being defended by a handful of men. Some of our divisions have less than a thousand men. . . And they're not only holding their ground; they've drawn to themselves crack German forces, German reserves, and they've gained for us the all important element—time! And now, see what we've accumulated meanwhile on the German flanks. (*Removes another sheet of paper from the table and then, carried away goes to the wall on the right and begins removing one sheet of paper after another. Elated*) Two tank corps, one cavalry, not counting the infantry divisions of the front! . . And the north side has even more! (*Steps over to the left, tears off sheet after sheet*) Tank corps, another tank corps bringing it to three. What do you think of that? Two cavalry. . . This is only the shock group. (*With an expressive gesture*) Why, we're going to ram them!

KRIVENKO (*enthusiastically*): In other words, you're going to strike now?

MURAVYEV (*soberly*): Wait a moment. See! (*He again moves round the table*) Klaus still has a number of crack divisions in the Mikhailovka area. . . (*Stubbornly*) But sooner or later he'll have to draw also on those divisions. Winter is only two-three weeks away. If they fail to take the city now they'll have to retreat in the frost, or spend the winter in a pocket. And neither alternative bodes good with such exposed flanks!

KRIVENKO (*in amazement*): I take it that you yourself want them to concentrate on the city?

MURAVYEV (*all excited*): Yes, yes. The all important thing is not to slip up, to time our operations when all their forces are tied up in the city and then (*he swiftly walks around the table, and as if going to strike flings his arm over the map*) we'll sweep forward from the north at this point . . . from the south here! And they'll be squeezed in our iron embrace and strangled. . . No one of them will get away, (*in a harsh voice*) not a single man.

(*Krivenko, overwhelmed by what he has heard, is dumbfounded. Pause.*)

KRIVENKO (*softly*): But how on earth did you resist the temptation. . . You had the will power to do it. . . .

MURAVYEV (*looks at him and laughs*) Of course, not.

KRIVENKO: But I remember at the time it was you, and you alone who refused to throw in the reserves.

MURAVYEV (*shaking his head*): No, no. I. . . It was Stalin.

(*Pause, Muravyev walks over to couch, sits down and lights a cigarette. Krivenko sits down next to him.*)

KRIVENKO (*reproachfully*): Why didn't you tell me at the time . . . or at least hint at it.

MURAVYEV (*with heavy sigh*): Yes, if only we could tell people everything in time of war, how much easier it would be. (*Starts smoking, looks at Krivenko*) And still, you can't forgive me for removing you at the time, can you?. . That's just too bad. You lacked the necessary confidence, which meant you would have ruined yourself and lost the city. . . (*Heartily shakes him by the shoulders*) Brother, you don't realize how fond I am of you. (*And then immediately covering up his impulsive statement, looks at his watch*) Well, that's a secondary matter. Why, already then I knew that big things were in store for your restless nature.

(*Vinogradov enters followed by generals.*)

VINOGRADOV: Allow me, sir.

MURAVYEV: Yes, yes. It's time to begin. (*To the generals*) Please be seated.

KRIVENKO: May I withdraw sir?

MURAVYEV (*in official tone*): Please remain. General Krivenko has recovered from his wound. (*Looks at Krivenko with faint smile and goes to the table*) He has been given command of one of the new formations. (*Radiant, Krivenko walks over to the table, head erect. Muravyev sits down and opens a folder. Generals take their seats in tense expectation.*)

MURAVYEV (*solemnly*): The Supreme Commander in Chief has instructed me to acquaint you with the plan of our decisive offensive drawn up by Supreme Headquarters.

(*Restrained movement of great relief. Only Vinogradov turns round, uneasy. The Chief of Intelligence Department enters and walking over to Vinogradov whispers something in his ear.*)

MURAVYEV: The plan of our offensive is based on the assumption that the German attacks will be intensified in the coming weeks preceding winter and Klaus will undoubtedly go all-out to take the city. (*Vinogradov writes a note and passes it on to Muravyev*) Hence. . . . (*Suddenly he becomes transfixed, looks at Vinogradov*) Are you joking?

VINOGRADOV (*hurriedly and in undertone*): No, no, everything has been verified. . . General Panteleyev's on the phone, waiting to speak with you (*Lavrov and Vinogradov bend over towards him and whisper in his ear.*)

MURAVYEV (*covers his eyes with his hand as if shielding them from the light and sits thus for a second*) What was I saying? . . .

LAVROV (*softly*): Kirill Stepanovich go to the telephone. . . In the meantime Vinogradov will prepare the maps.

MURAVYEV (*slowly*): Excuse me. . . I'll be back in a moment. (*Rapidly leaves the room.*)

(*Animation among the generals, Lavrov in a clear voice: "Yes, yes, the commander's wife is alive . . . she has returned." The two officers remove all the sheets of paper covering the huge maps on the walls. Muravyev strides back, an angry expression on his face.*)

MURAVYEV: Why wasn't I informed that the Germans had called off their attacks inside the city?

VINOGRADOV: I didn't want to wake you.

STUDENTSOV: I can report the same about my sector where a lull set in today from about 2 o'clock.

MURAVYEV: What, on your sector too? (*Sharply to Vinogradov*) I demand to be informed of such reports immediately at all hours of the day and night. (*Slowly walks to his place and stops*) What does it mean. . . . (*Curtain. Map shows plan of Soviet offensive.*)

SCENE 8

Moonlight night. Left of stage a patch of light etches out the ruins of a house. In the background the dark shape of a wall with gaping windows and holes. High up along the wall the remains of an upper floor which is reached by a rickety stairway with twisted balustrade. Right half of stage is in complete darkness.

On the upper floor at a window the immobile silhouette of the lieutenant. Behind stage a voice: "Who goes there?"

A dark figure ascends the stairway.

LIEUTENANT: Who goes there? (*Recognizes Muravyev*) Sir, the house entrusted to me. . . .

MURAVYEV (*in low voice*): I know . . . thanks. (*Goes to the window. Listens*) Quiet, isn't it?

LIEUTENANT: Yes, sir. . . So quiet that I can't sleep.

MURAVYEV: Yes . . . I can't sleep either. (*Pause. They walk away. The even hum of a "U-2" engine. A short burst of laughter somewhere below. The light shifts and reveals a group of men, among them Stepan, resting amidst the rubble.*)

STEPAN (*looking up at the sky*): There goes a "U-2" . . . (*Pause*) Say, lads, have you ever noticed the way the German "Junkers" roar? (*Imitating sound*) Ki-ll, you-u, and ours: bunk-um! bunk-um!

(*Hearty laughter. Suddenly a voice: "Attention!" All jump up. Out of dark gap there appear Muravyev, the lieutenant and several officers.*)

MURAVYEV: Take it easy boys. (*Glances round at men. Recognizes Stepan*) We've met before, haven't we? . . Oh, my friend, if only you'd capture me another such major. (*With a gesture*) The trouble it would save me.

STEPAN (*flattered*): I'll never get another fool to come riding straight into my arms. You see, sir, they've learned a thing or two since then. But . . . we can go out, do a bit of encirclement and bag an officer.

MURAVYEV (*pricks up his ears*): Encircle?

STEPAN: Exactly, creep around a pillbox. (*Grins*) We've also learnt a thing or two.

MURAVYEV: Go ahead. . . I'll be expecting results. (*Leaves.*)

(Left of stage blacked out. Right side gradually illuminated. Lower down Panteleyev's basement. Liza at the table which is laid for tea. She is in a fever of expectation. Panteleyev is fussing around her.)

PANTELEYEV: Elizaveta Mikhailovna, eat something. This lull is, after a fashion, a breathing spell for us and especially for you who are so worn out.

LIZA (*absent-mindedly*): Thank you, I'm not a bit hungry.

PANTELEYEV (*looks at his watch*): Well, then, rest on the bed while you're waiting. (*Points to bed*) It's really comfortable.

LIZA: No, no, if I lie down I'm sure to drop off . . . and he should be here any minute now. . . There!

(*Footsteps. Liza jumps up and stands rooted to the spot. Door opens, Muravyev sees her and stops on the threshold.*)

LIZA (*voicelessly*): Kirill!

(*Muravyev runs down the steps towards Liza and embraces her. Pressing her face to his chest, she starts crying.*)

PANTELEYEV (*mumbles*): I'll just go out and see what's doing. (*Quietly leaves the room.*)

MURAVYEV (*softly*): Darling . . . don't cry . . . everything has turned out all right after a-ll. . . .

LIZA (*smiling through her tears*): Of course, of course . . . but tell me, how's our Tanya. . . .

MURAVYEV: Fine. Everything's as it should be. Did you get her letter? I forwarded it to you. . . .

LIZA: Yes, I got it. . . Oh, Kirill! (*embraces and kisses him.*)

MURAVYEV: What happened to you? How did you get away?

LIZA (*feverishly*): I'll tell you everything. (*Stumbles. Muravyev supports her*) How silly. I've stuck it well up to now and here with you, I've gone all wobbly.

MURAVYEV (*leading her*): Come, lie down.

LIZA: Ivan Anisimovich suggested that I rest on his bed. (*Lies down*) I'll tell you all about it in a minute.

MURAVYEV (*sits down on bed and takes her hand*): Liza, Liza, what you must have gone through these past weeks. . . But why did you remain behind when the division withdrew?

LIZA (*leaning on her elbow*): But what could I. . . You see, an officer was sent to take me back. . . he was badly wounded on the way . . . I found a safe place for him with peasants and did everything possible to save him . . . Oh, how difficult and hopeless it was. I knew he'd die. . . But would you have had me act differently?

MURAVYEV (*reproachfully*): Didn't you think about me even once?

LIZA: No, I don't think I did. When somebody dies for you, you don't think about yourself. (*Lies with dilated eyes*) And then, I started walking over what seemed endless, dusty roads. . . But what is there to tell? Rain, mud. . . Partisans. . . Ah, yes! (*Jumps up and sits down again and crosses her legs*) That was the most horrible part of all. While on our way through Mikhailovka, German tommy gunners cordoned off the streets and herded everybody into the courtyards. I was certain it was a raid and that we'd be rounded up. . . However, it wasn't. Troops on motorcycles raced ahead and then came a big car with a general. . . .

MURAVYEV (*sharply*): Klaus?

LIZA: Yes, yes. I stood there in tatters, barefoot, hugging the fence, watching it all. And suddenly I remembered that you had promised to meet me here . . . instead he was riding like the master. . . It was a horrible moment, degradingly horrible. (*Drops back on cushion*) For a minute I felt I was part of the earth . . . our earth . . . despoiled by those boots, those tyres. . . .

MURAVYEV (*pursing his lips, softly*) What was his idea?

LIZA: I don't know. He was just riding somewhere. But what are you thinking about? (*Starts laughing*) Good gracious, you're simply incorrigible. You're not even listening. . . .

MURAVYEV (*takes her hand*): Forgive me. (*Lowers his head*) I'm in a frightful mental turmoil. . . I've never admitted this to anyone but you. . . .

LIZA (*slowly sits up, eyes wide open*) What was that you said? Do you mean to tell me you are not sure? That you don't know whether we'll win? (*Feverishly*) Listen. I walked across our scorched earth. And I had the impression that I'd been walking a lifetime, and the sights I saw . . . children murdered women, suffering and sorrow . . . all seemed to mount up behind me, cling to me, and urge me on—to you. You were always in my mind. No, it wasn't so much that I missed you. I hadn't the strength for that. All my love resolved into the overpowering thought that you must return, must be victorious. . . That I would eventually reach you and demand!

MURAVYEV: Calm yourself. So it shall be.

LIZA: Of course. . . I felt that when I was in the city. At first I was stunned, even later it seemed to me I would never survive this inferno; and yet I grew used to it. . . I'm like a dray horse. And when you're at work you're oblivious to everything. You're as calm and confident as everybody else around you. But sometimes I remember that I'm your wife and then fear grips me. I look around and cannot understand why everybody is so calm. So confident. (*Passionately*) Kirill, tell me that you are planning something, that all this will end soon!

MURAVYEV: There's nothing I can tell you. We've just got to stand firm.

LIZA: Yes. . . I know. . . (*Passes her hand across her face*) Wait a minute. . . My head is swimming. (*Closes her eyes*) Are you really here?

(*Pause. Muravyev looks at Liza. She has fallen asleep. He carefully disengages his hand and tiptoes to the table. Knitting his brows, pours out glass of water. Panteleyev softly enters room.*)

PANTELEYEV: What an evil silence. There's something behind it.

MURAVYEV (*looks at him, slowly pulls out a slip of paper and passes it to Panteleyev*) Read the instructions of the Supreme Command. (*Watching him, goes on to explain*

Time X" signifies the date of our decisive ow.

PANTELEYEV (*joyously*): That means a few days. . . Thank goodness. . . *Gulps, blows his nose and stealthily wipes s eyes with a handkerchief*) We've weathered ie storm!

MURAVYEV: It was tough Ivan Anisiovich, wasn't it?

PANTELEYEV: What's been has been. . . .

MURAVYEV (*tapping his fingers on table*): ut what's he up to? . . . Is it possible e's got wind of our offensive . . . (*Anxiously*) r is he pulling out?

PANTELEYEV: Of course not, my iend. . . Do you think they're going to ive up at the last lap after they've been reaming to the world about the "capture" the city, about its imminent fall.

MURAVYEV (*takes a glass of tea*): Is iat strawberry jam?

PANTELEYEV (*pushes jar towards Muvyev*): And home-made, too. My wife is expert in this field. . . Please, help urself.

Vinogradov and Chief of Intelligence Department enter.)

MURAVYEV: What's the matter?

VINOGRADOV (*excitedly*): Sir, three days go Klaus held a conference in the Mikhaivka woods and according to reports Hitler s present. (*Shows a sheet of paper*) Comre it with this.

(*Muravyev literally snatches the documents, aces them on the table and starts reading. Tense pause.*)

PANTELEYEV (*softly*): Hm . . . He certinly hasn't taken the trip merely to quarter e men in winter billets.

MURAVYEV (*banging the table*): It's ar. Fear for his prestige has driven Hitler re. (*Paces the floor*) Fear of the hysterical uhrer will drive Klaus to march on the ty, fear of wintering in a sack will impel ie soldiers onward.

PANTELEYEV: They'll go all-out to orm the city.

VINOGRADOV: Yes . . . this is the alm before the storm.

(*Pause*)

PANTELEYEV (*anxiously*): And we, I ke it, will steal a march on them?

MURAVYEV (*mechanically*): Yes. . . No, othing of the kind! They enjoy the advanage of internal operational lines. If we unch our offensive ahead of them Klaus ill still have time to switch the divisions served for the assault on the city, to the ctors of our breakthrough.

PANTELEYEV (*coughs, angrily shakes is head*): No, no, we must wait. Let them ttack. Once they're in, we'll strike!

MURAVYEV (*weighing the question*): Which eans postponing the date of our offensive. *Turning to Panteleyev*) And you? You know hat it means should you falter. . . .

PANTELEYEV (*quietly*): If I didn't I'd ave succumbed long ago.

VINOGRADOV: This time the assault ill be more violent than we anticipated, think the forces in the city should be reinrced with a few more divisions.

MURAVYEV (*curtly*): From where? From the divisions mounted for the offensive and thus weaken the blow?

VINOGRADOV (*with restraint*): On the contrary, Comrade Commander, it would mean making doubly sure of the certainty of the blow.

MURAVYEV (*flares up*): Certainty of the blow means striking with all forces at once. (*Again paces the floor*) Panteleyev won't be left alone for long because we shall be striking almost at once, and then Klaus will have something more than the city to think of.

VINOGRADOV (*insistently*): Yes, but Klaus will reason exactly the same way, he, too, will concentrate all his forces in one blow, and then. . . .

MURAVYEV: I know, I know. . . (*To Panteleyev*) How many do you need, Ivan Anisimovich?

PANTELEYEV (*heaves a sigh*): Let's not discuss how many I need but how many you can spare. . . .

MURAVYEV (*in gloomy indecision*): Hm. . . will three . . . no two divisions do?. . .

PANTELEYEV (*coughs*): I figured on at least three.

(*Muravyev, chagrined, starts pacing the floor.*)

VINOGRADOV (*cautiously as if weighing every word*): Kirill Stepanovich. . . If Panteleyev is to hold his ground we must . . . either reinforce him or weaken the German blow. . . We have stocked up with shells on the assumption of persistent and violent German attacks. And if. . . .

MURAVYEV (*immediately grasps the point*): Splendid! To open fire from all guns simultaneously, in the space of half an hour! (*Embraces Vinogradov*) That's a brilliant idea, Vladimir Vikentyevich! That's just what we're going to do.

PANTELEYEV: Excuse me, sir, I don't quite understand. . . .

MURAVYEV (*animatedly*): Just a minute, I'll explain. (*Suddenly breaks off and looks at sleeping Liza. Slowly walks over to the bed, bends over Liza and begins to wake her*) Liza. . . Liza . . . get up, Liza.

LIZA (*opens her eyes*): Gracious . . . I dreamt we were at home and that there was no war, the sun was shining, but something heavy was hanging in front, something dark . . . most probably blood rushing to the head. . . .

MURAVYEV (*softly*): I'm afraid, Liza, you'll have to leave.

LIZA (*looks around*): Oh, forgive me . . . I've detained you. (*Jumps out of bed, hurriedly pulls on her greatcoat, picks up her army bag, irresolutely looks at Muravyev. . . He returns the look gravely, aloof. The generals are silent. . . Liza smiles at him timidly and leaves.*)

PANTELEYEV (*accompanies her a few steps*): Be careful, my dear, as you round the corner, even though there's a lull. . . .

(*Liza leaves. Pause.*)

MURAVYEV: And so . . . (*To Panteleyev*) I can't spare three divisions. You'll have to be satisfied with two . . . I know it's not enough, but as a result we're going to weaken Klaus' blow considerably. How?

An hour and a half before the German assault our artillery will open up on their batteries and troops lined up for the attack. . . It'll be a veritable tornado. . . We'll pour out a month's supply in half an hour. . . Klaus won't be able to call off his offensive within the hour and whether he likes it or not, he'll have to strike, but, with half his calculated forces.

PANTELEYEV: Aha, the very ground will be taken from under their feet . . . in that case we'll hold our own!

VINOGRADOV: But, to achieve this we must know the exact day and hour of the German assault. (*With misgiving*) It's risky, very risky. All will be lost if we hurry or are too late.

MURAVYEV (*looks at him*): Vladimir Vikentyevich, again you're right, but . . . the risk must be taken. (*Decisively*) Reconnaissance! Do you realize the responsibility that rests with you? The exact day and hour of the German offensive!

CHIEF OF INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT: Yes, sir.

MURAVYEV: We'd better leave nov Must contact Supreme Headquarters at onc (*Strides toward the entrance, stops, with wave of the hand sends the generals ahead ar returns to Panteleyev. Gripping the latter hand Muravyev says in a warm voice*) I'v got to like you very much in these gri days. . . .

PANTELEYEV (*embrarrassed*): Why we've met no more than four times, that. . . .

MURAVYEV: I was conscious of yo support every minute of the day. Well. . (*Embraces and kisses Panteleyev*) Take ca of yourself. (*They look each other in the fa and laugh*) I know, but try to do so und the circumstances. . . (*Leaves. Has alread opened the door, turns round and slyly*) Iva Anisimovich, I was afraid you were goi to insist on three divisions.

PANTELEYEV (*in the same tone*): An I was afraid you'd only give me one!

(*Both burst out laughing.*)

Curtain

ACT 4

SCENE 9

Front H.Q. Office in darkness. Only light comes from shaded table lamp. The adjutant is do ing in a chair. Silence, followed by sound of voices and footsteps. Adjutant jumps up. Vinograd Chief of Intelligence Department, Sergeyev, enter hurriedly.

VINOGRADOV (*in a low voice*): Wake the Commander.

ADJUTANT: He has only just dropped off.

VINOGRADOV: Wake him immediately. (*To the Chief of the Intelligence Department*) Have you the protocol of the interrogation? Take him in. (*Passing into the office switches on the light.*)

(*The adjutant leaves. Prisoner brought in. Chief of Intelligence Department goes to office. A minute later Chief of Artillery comes in, glances at prisoner and enters office. Muravyev comes out of his room, buttoning his tunic.*)

VINOGRADOV: The Germans are attacking today at 6 a.m. Attack will be preceded by artillery barrage at 4. Panteleyev has sent a prisoner. . . Here's the protocol. . . .

MURAVYEV (*knitting his brows*): Is the prisoner here? (*He goes to the door and opening it, intently stares at prisoner for a second.*)

CHIEF OF INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT: A sapper. Caught clearing corridor in a minefield. He confirms that the attack will be at 6 a. m. and artillery barrage at 4 a. m.

MURAVYEV (*looks at his watch*): Take him away. (*Returns, reads protocol.*)

VINOGRADOV: Things seem to tally all right. Must contact Supreme Headquarters.

MURAVYEV (*again looks at his watch*): We won't have time. If this is correct we got to begin immediately. . . (*Sits down at the table, turns round*) Well, "god war" . . . You won't let us down, will yo

ARTILLERY CHIEF: Certainly not, Co rade Commander! We'll knock out half Klaus' striking power all right.

MURAVYEV (*after a second's hesitatio* Right! Prepare the artillery for action!

VINOGRADOV (*bending over to him, an undertone*): Such a decision without co sulting Supreme Headquarters? And suppo ing it proves to be false intelligence?

MURAVYEV (*brusquely*): I said prepar (*Drops his head on his arms and tightly pre ing his forehead, sits motionless.*)

ARTILLERY CHIEF (*speaking into rece er in muffled tone*): Yes, yes . . . and don leave the telephone. (*Replaces receiver a remains at the telephone.*)

(*Tense silence. Everybody seems rooted to t spot. When Vinogradov, stepping carefull walks over to Sergeyev, the creak of the flo board is distinctly heard. Sergeyev has h back to the audience and it is difficult to d tinguish what is being said, especially sin they are speaking in undertones.*)

SERGEYEV: If we let the opportuni slip, rest assured Supreme Headquarte won't pat us on the back for that.

VINOGRADOV: We've got to chan it. If we're late in opening fire, Panteley will be overwhelmed.

(*Pause. Lavrov enters. He immediately sens the atmosphere. Quietly walks up to Chi of Intelligence who, speaking in a whispe informs him of the situation. Lavrov liste nodding his head and looking at Muravyev*

SERGEYEV: And what if we open fire nd nothing happens at 4 o'clock. . . Supposing the Germans don't attack?

VINOGRADOV: God forbid . . . it means e'll have used up our entire supply of hells . . . and then it'll make no difference hen the Germans start—the city will be heirs all the same.

LAVROV (*sits down without taking eyes ff Muravyev. Suddenly in a loud voice*): But e'll never get an opportunity like this gain, and if we let it slip, we're lost. Everyning's at stake.

(*Muravyev sits immobile.*)

CHIEF OF INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT: (*softly*) Time's flying!

(*Pause*)

MURAVYEV (*slowly gets up*): It's death r glory! Open fire. (*To Artillery Chief*) all.

ARTILLERY CHIEF (*speaking into the ceiver*): Open up . . . yes, yes, at once, this ery minute. . . . (*Looks at his watch.*)

Muravyev also looks at his watch and sits own. Again tense silence. . . Suddenly a uffled, distant rumble shakes the building, e ringing tinkle of windowpanes. All remain otionless as if stunned. Only on the lips f the Artillery Chief a faint smile plays. . . avrov unhurriedly gets up and leaves the om. Pause, filled with the thunder of guns. he light slowly fades. Rumble continues in the arkness, gradually growing fainter and faint- and ceases just as the light returns. . . All are n their places. The same tension. Muravyev reading a newspaper. The generals are nversing in low voices. Only at back of stage nogradov is restlessly pacing the floor. Lavrov is back in the room.)

LAVROV: I recall when I was on holiday st time. . . .

ARTILLERY CHIEF (*looks at his watch*): Our guns have stopped long ago; theirs hould be going into action soon.

SERGEYEV (*sighs*): I wish they'd start.

CHIEF OF INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT: Don't worry, they'll go off with erman punctuality on the stroke of 4!

LAVROV: As I was saying, in 1925, I arrivd at a health resort (*One of the listeners eep in thought walks away*) in perfect health. ut about a week later I began to feel off olour.

Back of stage Vinogradov stops and glances at his watch.)

ARTILLERY CHIEF: Things like that o happen . . . (*Looks at Vinogradov, takes few steps and lifts hand with watch.*)

LAVROV: So, feeling a bit depressed decided to see the doctor. . . .

Breaks off in the middle. Sergeyev looks at is watch. Muravyev drops newspaper. Imperptibly all fall silent, eyes glued to their watches. A long pause.)

VINOGRADOV (*softly*): They'll soon bein. . . .

(*Clock behind wall strikes four.*)

All raise their heads and listen. Silence. ach looks at his watch, only Muravyev, as petrified stares ahead. An intolerable, tense silence which gradually relaxes. Some, nervously steal a glance at their neighbours, others quietly turn away from their watches. Sergeyev, as if hiding his face, quietly leaves. Muravyev slowly lowers his head onto his arms. Only Vinogradov and Lavrov keep looking at their watches.)

VINOGRADOV (*virtually exhausted*): Ten past four . . . there won't be anything now. (*Muravyev straightens himself, his face twitches. . . Suddenly distant rumble. A general sigh of relief, everybody starts talking simultaneously.*)

LAVROV: Got him!

CHIEF OF INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT: There's German punctuality for you!

MURAVYEV (*reeling back into chair*): Those ten minutes were worth a lifetime! (Jumps up) I knew it. In my mind's eye I saw Klaus tossing about during those ten minutes in an agony of indecision, flabbergasted by the suddenness of it all! He'll now hurl himself against us like a mad bull. (*The thunderous rumble increases in volume and continues until the end of the scene. For a second all listen, revelling in the very sound of the guns, and then get active.*)

ARTILLERY CHIEF: Never mind, he's still got something left. (*In a hurry*) Shall I go out and look around?

MURAVYEV (*excitedly*): Go ahead. Issue an order for the artillery to be ready for the offensive.

ARTILLERY CHIEF: Yes, sir! (*Withdraws.*)

MURAVYEV (*to Chief of Intelligence Department*): Follow Klaus' movements, report on how he's bringing forces into the city. Keep the flanks constantly informed.

CHIEF OF INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT: Yes, sir. (*Runs out.*)

(*Telephone rings.*)

MURAVYEV (*to Sergeyev*): Please answer the phone. (*To Vinogradov*) Vladimir Vikentyevich, you hand over everything to Sergeyev and leave for the southern sector. . . I think. . . .

SERGEYEV (*handing over the receiver*): It's a call from the city.

MURAVYEV (*taking the receiver*): I know. . . (*Replaces the receiver, continues*) I think tomorrow. . . .

(*The thunder of artillery. Krivenko comes striding in.*)

KRIVENKO: May I?

MURAVYEV (*laughing*): You've come, I see!

KRIVENKO (*radiant*): "I love thunder in early May". [1]

VINOGRADOV: In the middle of November.

KRIVENKO (*boisterously*): You are a stickler for exactitude Vladimir Vikentyevich. Even the calendar slips up now and again, certainly every four years in February. (*Laughing*) Today it's May.

MURAVYEV: Rather early.

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[1] From a poem by Fyodor Tyutchev

KRIVENKO: What, still too early? Why, my tanks are roaring to go into action. (*Seriously*) I'm joking, Comrade Commander. As a matter of fact I've come to report that I'm ready. The tanks are concentrating at the initial points.

MURAVYEV: Come into my office. We'll talk things over!

(*Telephones on the adjutant's table and in the office ring.*)

ADJUTANT: He's engaged at the moment.

VINOGRADOV: Yes. . . Continue. (*A third telephone rings. Nods to Sergeyev.*)

SERGEYEV: Hello. . . Yes. . . I'll take it down. . . .

(*Muravyev and Krivenko enter.*)

KRIVENKO (*laughing heartily*): Oh, no, I told him, you can't dump trophy fuel on to me, in any case the stuff's synthetic. What's more I'll be careering about in frost so I'll need real, Soviet stuff!

MURAVYEV (*smiling*): All right . . . go ahead. (*Stretches out his hand.*)

KRIVENKO: Comrade Commander, excuse me . . . but here's wishing me good luck.

(*Embraces Muravyev. Shakes hands with Lavrov and Sergeyev*) Good luck to you! (*To Vinogradov*) I'll shake hands with you in Mikhailovka. Cheerio, see you soon! (*Walks to the door, turns round and in exultant voice starts reciting.*)

When the first thunder of spring . . .
Breaks across the heavens blue. . . .

O-oo. Now I'll make up for everything. (*Leaves.*)

MURAVYEV (*imperiously*): General Krivenko! (*Krivenko returns and stands at attention*) You'll break through, go forward and effect a junction with General Vinogradov. I insist that you act with the coolness and careful calculation displayed by General Vinogradov.

KRIVENKO: Certainly, sir. (*With quiet force*) The blade forged on the anvil is known as cold steel when it goes into action. . . May I leave?

MURAVYEV: Good luck to you!

VINOGRADOV (*smiling*): I certainly don't envy the Germans. (*Standing at attention*) Permit us to withdraw, sir.

MURAVYEV (*goes up to Vinogradov, grasps his hand*): Vladimir Vikentyevich. . . .

VINOGRADOV (*Gravely*): I've figured things out to the last detail and I'm confident of the success of our breakthrough.

MURAVYEV: I don't doubt it for a moment, but I'd like you to carry it through with the temperament of General Krivenko.

VINOGRADOV (*smiles*): All right. I've seen so many things that I'd formerly considered impossible. I'll do my best! (*To Sergeyev*) Let's go. (*The two leave.*)

(*Pause. Muravyev paces the office, stops and listens to the thunder of the cannonade.*)

MURAVYEV: What's happening in the city now. . . Ivan Anisimovich must be having a tough time. . . .

LAVROV (*getting up*): Look here, I'll ru along to him.

MURAVYEV: No. Wait a little, Lavro Maybe I'll have it harder. We don't kno yet what encouragement will come fro Supreme Headquarters. Have you phoned

LAVROV: Yes.

(*Pause. Telephone rings.*)

LAVROV (*looking at the telephone*): S preme. . . .

MURAVYEV (*hurries to the telephon lifts receiver*): General Muravyev. . . Just s all calculations justified. . . I hope so. . No, I'm confident, Comrade Stalin! . . course. . . Of course. . . Thank you, Com rade Stalin. . . (*Carefully replaces the r ceiver, excitedly*) Well, Comrade Lavrov. . Tomorrow at 3, at dawn . . . so that that. . . (*Swiftly walks into his room an in loud gay voice*) Comrade Stalin said "I wish you success!"

LAVROV (*firmly*): And that means w will be successful.

(*Muravyev comes out of his room puttin on his greatcoat.*)

MURAVYEV: I'm leaving now for th northern sector. (*In a loud voice*) The ca

LAVROV: Well, in that case I'll go Vinogradov. He's a steady general, but wouldn't hurt to pep up the men a bit.

MURAVYEV: No, Comrade Lavrov, I like you to remain here . . . in my place. . Just in case, you know.

LAVROV: Kirill Stepanovich, now? Really that's asking the impossible of me.

MURAVYEV: Your turn will ro around. . . Well, stay at least until I g to the place. (*Leaves all aglow*) We're begi ning, Comrade Lavrov, beginning. . . .

(*Lavrov slowly returns and sits down in a armchair near the table. Leaning back, clos his eyes.*)

LAVROV (*aloud*): We'll have to bui the city anew. . . .

(*Pause. Telephone rings.*)

Hello . . . No, he's left. This is Lavrov . . Ivan Anisimovich? Dangerous? You shou have been more careful. Good. (*Replac receiver and gets up*) Well. . . My turn come. (*Goes into the anteroom, to the adj tant*) I'm going into the city. If the command should phone tell him that General Pant leyev is fatally wounded . . . both le smashed. (*Stops at the door*) No, better n say anything. I'll phone myself later. Only tell him that the city is holding o fine, clear? I'm off. (*Leaves.*)

(*Curtain drops to the accompaniment of ca nonade which grows ever louder. The red arro on curtain-map have cut through the bl line and joined at Mikhailovka. A clos circle, evidently hurriedly drawn in colour pencil, catches the eye, a blue point insi the circle is crossed out in red. Entre'a ushered in by fading gunfire and musi

SCENE 10

Commander's room. Winter sun streams through the windows. Everything in the room is packed for removal—cases nailed down, maps rolled up. Somewhere in the vicinity the band of a passing unit is playing an old military march. Muravyev and Liza are sitting on a couch. . . She is telling him in a low voice about the death of Panteleyev. Muravyev listens with head lowered.

LIZA: Ivan Anisimovich himself gave strict instructions that you shouldn't be told. He insisted and was angry about it. . . Right to the end he closely followed operations. I couldn't stay with him all the time—you know how difficult it was in the city. I'd snatch every spare minute to visit him, and he. . . (*She repeats his words carefully, slowly, as if still hearing them*) "You should get some sleep, my dear. . ." and he'd smile under his moustache. "Don't worry, I'm an old soldier. . . I'm not leaving until the operation is completed."

(*Adjutant enters.*)

ADJUTANT: Sir, everything's already loaded onto the trucks. Can they start on this room?

MURAVYEV: There's plenty of time. (*Adjutant withdraws. To Liza*) But he lived to see the day. He knew about it?

LIZA: Yes. The minute we knew of the German surrender I ran over to him. You see he couldn't sleep because of the terrible pain. He immediately understood by the expression on my face and even sat up . . . Heaving a deep sigh he said: "So . . . the job's done . . . Russian glory's restored . . ." And closed his eyes. He was very weak. And then . . . I still don't know whether he said it to me or to himself: "can now depart." (*Wipes her eyes with a handkerchief*) After that he refused to take any medicine . . . "Don't need it, I've come to the end of my tether, already written to my wife that I'm departing. And I'm so tired. . ." (*Deeply moved*) You know, Kirill, I've seen so many people die here, I'm a doctor and yet I'm horror-struck at times. But he died so peacefully, I'd even say with joy!

MURAVYEV (*sadly*): He was a fine man. Modest . . . kind and yet made of iron. Of the old Russian calibre.

LIZA (*musingly*): You know, we are actually different people now. I never gave this a thought before, but in Ivan Anisimovich I found something near and dear. . . so hope our people retain these qualities.

MURAVYEV (*sighs*): And "Minutka" didn't live to see the day.

LIZA: Yes, "Minutka" too. . . (*Thinks*) God, and how many others!

MURAVYEV (*intently, slowly choosing his words*): I've been observing people. . . We've failed to notice the new national character moulded in this war. . . In this frightful crucible . . . the old Russian valour, the coolness and endurance of the five-year-plans seem to have merged and produced unparalleled will power and courage. (*Laughs*) The Germans are trying to scare us with a new "secret weapon"! In my opinion this new Soviet character is the most formidable "secret weapon" of our people.

(*Pause*)

LIZA: How I don't want to leave you. . . .

MURAVYEV (*taking her by the shoulders*): Stay here, Liza.

LIZA (*sighs*): You know very well that that's impossible. No, I can't, the division is already entraining. (*Throws back her head and closes her eyes*) You know I think I can already imagine what it'll be like . . . when it's all over. . . Peace. . . Life. . . .

(*Chief of Intelligence Department enters.*)

CHIEF OF INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT: Klaus is here, sir.

LIZA (*gets up*): I'll run along and see about the packing and lay the table. Will Comrade Lavrov be here to say good-bye?

MURAVYEV: No, he's gone by plane to Moscow. (*Laughs*) He's already dreaming of rebuilding the city. (*Gets up, frowns and asks*) Well, where is he?

CHIEF OF INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT: Here, in the anteroom.

(*Muravyev reluctantly walks to the door, slightly opens it and peers in.*)

MURAVYEV (*turns back*): Send the men who brought him in.

CHIEF OF INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT (*in surprise*): And what about Klaus?

MURAVYEV: Hm . . . (*With a wave of the hand*) You see to him . . . I'm more interested in Manstein now. (*Enters office.*)

(*Chief of Intelligence Department leaves. A minute later Lieutenant Fyodorov and Stepan enter.*)

MURAVYEV: Good day, my conquering heroes.

LIEUTENANT: } Go-od . . . Comrade
STEPAN: } Colonel-General!

LIEUTENANT (*confused*): Beg pardon, Army General. Force of habit.

MURAVYEV (*laughs*): Yesterday another star was added to my uniform, thanks to you fellows. But this is the last day you'll be walking around as lieutenant. (*Threateningly to Stepan*) And, you, sergeant, what do you mean by deceiving the Commander—you promised to bag a major, instead you deliver a field marshal, what do you call that?

STEPAN (*clearing his throat*): Excuse me, Comrade Army General, that's true. . . At the time a miserable sapper was all I could lay my hands on. (*Shakes his head*) That's how it is with the Russian—he starts out in arrears and then more than makes up for it. (*Anxiously*) Comrade Commander if you really need a major, why, with pleasure—we've got 'em ten a penny.

MURAVYEV: I invite you on behalf of the officers and men of the front to do me the honour of lunching with me today... Take a seat, comrades... sit down, sit down! You've a long way to go yet, you may just as well take the weight off your feet.

LIEUTENANT: Thank you. (*Does not sit down.*)

STEPAN: We find it a relief to be on our feet, Comrade Commander, you see in the city we did most of the fighting on our bellies. (*Continues standing.*)

MURAVYEV: Orders are orders. Sit down... On the couch, on the couch—today you are the greatest men in the world! (*The lieutenant and Stepan sit down but immediately jump up as General Krivenko enters.*)

KRIVENKO: May I? (*Smiling nods towards the anteroom*) The conqueror, eh?

MURAVYEV: So you're off to take command of a new front? Probably glad to be your own master now....

KRIVENKO: Glad to be taking up a new assignment without delay. Got to keep them on the run! (*To Muravyev in low voice from all his heart*) Thank you for everything, Commander. (*Turns round to the lieutenant and Stepan*) Good-day to you, eagles!

LIEUTENANT: } Good... Lieutenant-
STEPAN: } General.

KRIVENKO (*looks at Stepan*): Just a minute... we've met before somewhere, chum?

STEPAN: All old soldiers are alike, Lieutenant-General.

KRIVENKO: A-a... what was it you said—you're fighting your way back, wasn't it?

STEPAN: Just so, back to the very border and beyond. That's when we are turning back! (*With a pleased smile on his face*) So you've recognized me?

KRIVENKO: I sure remember that road! (*To the lieutenant*) So you're still going strong!

LIEUTENANT (*with a grim smile*): Tried to kill me more than once, but there's no killing me until I get to Berlin. Maybe I'll dig in there ... and do sentry duty.

(*Vinogradov hurriedly walks in carrying papers. He is followed by the adjutant.*)

VINOGRADOV: Kirill Stepanovich. We must hurry. (*To the adjutant*) Start packing. (*Shakes Krivenko's hand*) Congratulations. Kirill Stepanovich, I think H.Q. should be moved further up the line. By the time we get there the front will have moved forward at least another 100 kilometres. (*Hands over the papers to Muravyev and they walk up to the map on the wall.*)

KRIVENKO (*smoking, to the lieutenant*) And where's that youngster, do you remember her? (*Laughs*) The tears were streaming down her face, she was scared to death but refused to budge. What people!

LIEUTENANT: She's alive. She's bound for Berlin too... to regulate the traffic there.

(*The adjutant and two officers begin carrying out the nailed boxes and maps.*)

MURAVYEV (*looking over the papers, in a low voice*): Vladimir Vikentyevich, the operation is completed. You are free to choose. Maybe you want an independent assignment? Comrade Stalin has asked me.

VINOGRADOV: No, Kirill Stepanovich. I prefer being with you to the end. That's if you?.... (*Lowers his head*) I haven't forgotten my mistakes. Thanks for teaching the old man a thing or two.

MURAVYEV (*in a low voice*): Enough, Vladimir Vikentyevich. What would I have done without your brutal analysis and exactitude? (*Slyly narrowing his eyes*) It was on the question of the "second front" that your political acumen let you down... But things aren't so simple as all that. We'll still have to do some hard thinking on this "second front" business. (*Carrying one of the papers walks towards the rest*) Congratulations, comrades. The tide has turned. At dawn this morning the front was breached on the southern and central sectors. We're only a part of the great offensive along the entire Soviet front! Now it's Westward Ho! On to Berlin!

(*Moscow radio interval signal heard. All turn round and stand stock still. Again and again the unforgettable interval signal. A long pause, occasionally broken by words spoken in an undertone and careful movements.*)

LIZA (*looking out of the door*): May I come in and listen? (*Opens the door. Behind her can be seen a gaily decorated table. She tiptoes into the office, smiling silently, presses the hands of the Lieutenant and Stepan, nods to the generals.*)

STEPAN (*in excited whisper*): It's about us....

LIEUTENANT (*sternly, in low voice*) We've already been mentioned. There is going to be another order....

VOICE OF LEVITAN (*Moscow Radio announcer*): Moscow calling! Order of the Day of the Supreme Commander in Chief.

Curtain

Translated by John Gibbons and Molly Perelman

Glory to the Fallen — *By Fyodor Bogorodsky*

NIKOLAI TIKHONOV

CAVALCADE[1]

I was travelling around making a study of the *eilagi*—the summer herding. I was particularly interested in the lives of the chabans, as the herdsmen are called in the south. After I had talked with the shepherds as much as I wished, looked at endless flocks, breathed the smoke of campfires till my head swam with it, been well bitten by the fleas that flourish in the felt mats in the tents, I became tired of wandering about the pastures, and set off across alpine meadows towards the north to rest from my travels in the hospitable Samura valley.

At first I travelled with a chaban who had offered to guide me to the nearest aul.[2] Later on, we overtook two horsemen and the next day the four of us travelled together.

One of the horsemen was a stout, elderly man in a very shabby woollen jacket, like a winter's coat, with large pockets. His cap was pulled down over his forehead, and he looked a very serious person. He was burned almost black with the sun, wore a bristly close-clipped moustache, had little to say, and sat his horse like a real highlander. His name was Terentyev; he was an irrigation worker, and had travelled the whole length and breadth of the Caucasus.

With such a companion, the road could not be dull. He could explain any feature of everyday life of nature, and illustrate the explanation with recollections from his own experience. True, we often galloped, and then the story would be broken off.

Our other companion was a young fellow with merry eyes who was called simply Safar. . . . He was a mountaineer, who had renounced highland attire for jacket and trousers tucked into high boots. He was a merry fellow, always boasting about the marvellous qualities of his dappled-grey, except for those occasions when he recalled how, unable to become a metal worker, he had had to qualify as a zootechnician instead—and then his face would darken and his eyes cloud over.

At one halt we were joined by a fifth traveller —a tired and unshaven militia-man. He was returning from an assignment on a winter pasture where he had gone in search of a horse pastled from a collective farmer. The affair had become involved, and furthermore he had caught cold and felt far from well. His conversation consisted of occasional curses at the wily horse-thief, interrupted by coughing. The rest of the time he smoked cigarettes and, with his whip, silently drove away the flies from the huge head of the thin gelding as he rode, sunk in his own official thoughts.

The alpine pastures in these parts seemed to reach right to the skies. The grass varied in height—at times it was only a few inches, at others, it would reach to the horse's knees, and then again it would rise over the riders' heads, the tops above the stretch of one's arm. These mountain pastures smelt inexplicably good, and the hot rays of the sun were tempered by breezes from the snowy peaks not far away.

After travelling for some hours, we came onto a well-trodden path leading us to a lovely valley. We walked our horses between green carpets that stretch to the very foot of the mountain, where the debris of fallen rock had accumulated. The yellow and red cliffs, towered above them.

These cliffs seemed to have been carved into the most amazing forms—one had a perverse pleasure in looking at them. Every moment the play of light and shade on their broken surfaces would bring out the profile of some marvellously beautiful or hideously ugly face, some monstrous animal or giant or the features of a good friend. You could find any of your thoughts expressed in this comedy of stone masks which mocked one's imagination with the most grotesque forms.

The eye might follow this play for hours without tiring, so varied and natural were its changes. The rosy rocks of a warm flesh colour, outlined against the blue sky, gave the impression of phantoms, startlingly lifelike, as though here indeed one were entering into some new realm of nature which one had never dreamed of seeing, something stronger and more beautiful than the accustomed one, to which familiarity had long ago brought indifference.

Soft, sweeping shadows continually floated along the green carpet of grass and drifted along to the place where the meadow subsided and the river gleamed far below, its sound inaudible.

I felt myself in the thrall of that excited, emotional state, not to be explained in words—the feeling that grips one in those moments when one seizes a pen and begins writing poetry without knowing why.

About me was a hot, blue day, the lofty dome of the sky, the snow-capped peaks, the immeasurable distances; and suddenly a line from a poem flashed into my mind—a line having nothing in common with all this. It was as though it were whispered in my ear, like a memory, a reminder of something in the far, far distant past.

When the day's work is done at last. . . .

[1] In the summer of 1940 I planned to write a large volume of stories from Caucasian material. The first of them, *Cavalcade*, was finished in June 1941. The war interrupted this work, but eventually I shall probably return to the book, whose heroes, naturally will have passed through all the trials and tribulations of the war. N. T.

[2] Mountain village. —Ed.

When the day's work is done at last. . . .
When the day's work is done at last. . . .

The line haunted me, I kept repeating it over and over, mechanically murmuring it under my breath. My horse was walking, tossing his mane. Through the ring of stirrups, the creaking of the saddle and the horse's snorts, another line floated into my mind, in no way connected with the first.

And hear the curfew-shot without you. . . .

There were no shots to be heard. Everything was quiet and peaceful in that friendly valley, and only those two lines rang in my head, as though they had flown from the high cliffs, or been born of the gleaming river and the intoxicating perfume of the meadow.

I could not remember the writer of those lines, or any connection between them. I felt a longing for movement, furious, desperate movement, that catches one's breath. I struck my horse with the whip, and it shot forward out of the cavalcade in a gallop, ears laid back, champing the bit. Before I had a chance to fill my lungs and hear the air whistling past my ears as it does only when galloping, another horse's head ranged up beside me, snorting, eyes distended. It was Safar.

He had overtaken me in a moment, and now we raced along side by side, leaving our companions far behind. It is a marvellous sensation when your horse is going at full gallop—a feeling of gaiety, intoxication. I have to admit that it is not without its dangers—there are many stones concealed in the grass on these upland meadows, and you can never tell what may be hidden round the next bend. One time we rushed straight into a stream, and my horse, breathing heavily and sending showers of water over me, flew over to the opposite bank, a cascade of pebbles following him; another time we nearly dashed into a bog; but we were reluctant to slow down.

I looked round. Terentyev and the shepherd were galloping after us, and even the militia-man's old nag, impelled by memories of the past, was tearing along as hard as it could. Mountain horses cannot stand another animal getting ahead of them. They immediately start up a race, even against the wish of their riders, and it is no easy matter to curb them.

We galloped on, intoxicated with the speed. The horses' flanks were moist; and their breathing laboured. I was leaning over my horse's neck, my knees tightly gripping his hot sides, and before me, as though etched in the air, flew the lines I kept whispering through dry lips:

When the day's work is done at last,
And hear the curfew-shot without you. . . .

They merged with the rhythm of the gallop, and in some way even seemed to be speeding it. On the right the fantastic cliffs flashed past, now approaching, now receding.

At last we brought our horses to a trot, then a walk, and for some minutes rode in silence. The cavalcade closed up again. That strange, inexplicable thrill of agitation had been blown away in the wind of our gallop.

"What's the sense of racing along like that?" said Terentyev reprovingly, wiping his brow with a large blue handkerchief. "Pushing the horses for no reason at all! If there wa any need for it!.. But it's just like you, Sa far," he concluded, evidently out of polite ness, for he could not have failed to see tha I had been the first.

Safar spat, scratched his side with hi whip and laughed.

"You're old, your blood's sluggish! Ho can you understand? What's the good trying to explain? You're too practical.

"And you are an Aziat."[1]

"Do you know what the word 'aziat' mean with us, in Lezghin? It means 'difficult but we want to live easily, lightly. Th least thing sets us off!" And he shook hi whip jokingly.

"A gallop's a necessary thing," I said i conciliatory tones. "In the army, too, th cavalry gallop when they're on the march. Th horses need to stretch themselves, freshe up. . . ."

"I daresay," Terentyev answered doggedly "but army horses are different."

He drew up and walked his horse alongsid mine. Suddenly he smiled slyly and pointe to something at the side, in a cleft of the moun tain.

Here the meadow fell away to the river i terraces, intersected by numerous narro paths, the tracks worn by the herds on the way down to the water.

"Look over there, to the left of that larg rock! You see that dog?"

I shaded my eyes with my hand and look ed in the direction he indicated. Yes, saw the dog—a typical mountain sheep-dog running freely up to the top of the slop suddenly he lay down on the ground and craw ed along the track below it, then again ra resolutely upwards, only to lie down agai and remain motionless.

"Why's he behaving like that?" I aske

"Now look higher up, to the right of th boulder," said Terentyev.

I looked where he was pointing, and notic a long grey patch. I could see that it w a herd. As usual, a billy-goat led the wa followed by the she-goats mincing along, a then, pushing and crowding each other, t grey mass of sheep.

The shepherd swung his staff over the backs, while dogs ran along at the sides, abo and below the herd, steering them away fro the edge. Others ran on ahead, halting sniff the air while the flock passed them, a then again running forward.

Now the single dog, which was right in t path of the flock, began making some v complicated movements, to avoid bei noticed by the other strange dogs.

It swung round against the wind, stretch out on the stones, head thrust forward, a watched the approaching enemy. At la having evidently decided that its calculati were correct, with a single bound it cut acr the path right in front of the noses of the sta ed dogs, which stopped in astonishme and was up the next hill before they had ti to recover and cut him off.

They all raised a mighty hullaballoo

[1] Aziat—Asiatic, used in Russian to in cate a hot-headed, hot-blooded person

ins on the banks of the agva in Georgia. Drawg by M. Lermontov

rking, howling and yelping, but the dog was lking sedately on, wagging its tail, not en deigning to glance round.

"You saw that?" said Terentyev. "It had ne down to drink alone. If those dogs from nother flock had caught it, they'd have torn to pieces. But it was grand the way it maned it, eh? Some of these dogs'll take on a wolf en when they're alone. Once they nearly agged me from my horse, I had a job to at them off." He fell silent for a moment d then continued irrelevantly: "Here in e mountains, instinct has its way in a great any things. A mountaineer takes to city othes, and stops wearing his kinjal[1]—it ould look absurd—a jacket and a kinjal. ut all the same, it's there in their bones, d they get a Finnish knife to wear under eir jackets. . . ."

I heard him with only half an ear, trying l the time to remember whose were those nes:

And hear the curfew-shot without you
When the day's work is done at last.

The riders were talking in Lezghin. The naban guffawed, throwing himself back in s saddle, Safar laughed complacently, nd a gleam of mirth lightened even the mili-a-man's features.

I heard a name, which the chaban repeated. listened, it sounded something like "Aishe, ishe," but I was not certain.

"Now take Safar," said Terentyev, puffing his clay pipe with the cherry-wood mouthece. "A young hothead, could break his neck a second, before you'd time to see what was hat! I've known him since he was a lad. . . ve been over all these mountains. . . ."

But I interrupted him to ask who was this ishe, of whom they were talking. He looked me in some surprise, listened to the general nversation, and then replied:

"The chaban's teasing Safar about a girl the aul we're going to—Aishe, she's eating r heart out for Safar, won't look at anybody else. But his mother betrothed him to some cross-eyed wench in Miskinji, and he roams about like a wild goat, wherever his fancy takes him. They're just telling a story about him, excuse me, but it's untranslatable. . . ."

Evening was approaching when we came to the large aul where we were to spend the night. But the weather, always capricious in the mountains, had changed so suddenly that instead of the aul we saw nothing but a dense, fleecy cloud shrouding the houses like a thick curtain. It was impossible to distinguish anything, we seemed to be riding through milk.

Here and there, pillars supporting the large broad balconies of the houses would loom up out of the mist, corners of roofs, stone walls—and disappear again.

"I'm visiting a man I know here," said Terentyev, "but we'll meet at the school where we'll probably spend the night."

We parted, I remaining with Safar, while Terentyev, the chaban and the militia-man took another path up the mountain.

Our horses were walking, heads down, sniffing the ground before planting their hooves on it. Sometimes the mist thinned out, and suddenly I saw a strange figure on an open space below us, beside a pile of logs. The head was swathed in a shawl, its fringe hanging below the belt, the upper part of the body was clothed in a kind of waistcoat, while on the legs were trousers narrow at the ankles, like the padded trousers worn by Red Army-men. The apparition was puffing at a long, thin pipe, which reached nearly to the ground.

"What's that?" I asked Safar, pointing to the figure.

Safar turned his head.

"That's a woman," he said. "All the women dress like that here. It's more convenient, you know. It's always cold in these parts, a bad climate altogether."

A fresh wave of mist engulfed us, raw, sticky and most unpleasant. The horses climbed higher and higher. We were moving up a narrow street and it was necessary to be very alert not to smash our heads against jutting corners or low balconies.

At last we came out onto some kind of

[1] A short sword or long dagger worn by ucasian mountaineers—part of their naonal costume. A Finnish knife—a small, nder, sharp dagger.

open space, where a gust of wind tore away the mist ahead of us as though it had been a curtain, and I involuntarily reined in my horse. Safar did the same.

Right in front of me stood a girl, leaning on the balustrade of the balcony which circled the house. If we had not been in the mountains, I should have found nothing surprising in the sight. But here in the mist, in an aul remote from any town, between cloud and snow, a very slender young girl, of such strange beauty that I involuntarily stopped and stared, was standing on the balcony looking straight at us. She was so close to me that I could have touched her feet with my whip.

Her face was pale, transparent, untouched by sunburn, her brows delicate, slightly frowning, her lips finely-chiselled and in her eyes an indifferent yet commanding expression. She made such a contrast with her surroundings that I was dumbfounded, and could only stammer stupidly.

She was wearing a simple grey dress, with a fluffy shawl drawn over her shoulders, a broad brown belt and cheap low-heeled shoes.

At last I pulled myself together.

"What a lovely girl you are! Where in the world have you come from?" I asked.

"I just came and what of it?" the girl replied without the slightest warmth in her voice.

"But where from?"

"Too far away to see from here."

"And what's your name?"

"Why should I tell you my name? It means nothing to you."

"And you've come to live here?"

"What's strange about that? It's cold here, I like the cold, I'm cold myself."

"Have you any idea what the winters here are like? Everybody goes down below, to Azerbaijan, and here everything's covered with snow. Only the old men and the children stay here under the snow, and the women who weave carpets. Can't get out till spring. . . ."

Suddenly she smiled, and a little colour stained her cheeks. Her eyes laughed.

"That doesn't matter to me," she said. "People live here, and we'll live here too."

"And what do you do here?"

Her face darkened, and her tone was almost angry as she answered:

"Nothing! I sleep with my husband. . . ."

"Well, I see you don't mince words!"

"That's the way I am. What are you stopping here for? I didn't come out here to meet you folks. Just you get along!"

"And how do we get to the school?"

"The school?" She turned, and following the direction of her finger, I turned my horse and looked at Safar. Brows knitted, he was staring at the unknown, never taking his eyes off her, and there was nothing left in them of our merry, conceited Safar. She was pointing up the street, without deigning to look at him.

"Go along that way—you'll see a stone wall. Then higher up, to the right—that'll be the school. . . ."

I touched Safar's horse with the whip, it started and walked on. The girl laughed loudly, and Safar seemed to awaken. He straightened his cap, jammed it down on his head and gave his dapple-grey such stroke with his whip that it reared. We wer on through the mist, and all I could rememb clearly of it was the girl's house with the ba cony and the carved pillars.

It was empty and cold in the school. one of the classrooms the desks had been pi ed to one side, and two girls were sittir on the floor, their legs drawn up under ther huddling beneath thin blankets, while slender youth wearing a kind of cowbo shirt was struggling with a primus stov which only emitted a thin line of blue smok

A tall thin mountain woman stood silen ly before us; she was wearing a costume ide tical with that I had seen on the stran figure on entering the aul. Now that I was ab to examine it more closely, I rather liked i

Yes, those were green quilted Red Arm trousers ending in heavy black men's boot over a white blouse was a blue velvet waistco sewn with a whole fortune in large ancie silver coins including even some with t profile of Stefan Batory. There was also fringed shawl drawn in round the wais But she had no pipe in her hand, and she sa nothing, since in any case we would not ha understood her.

She watched the girls indifferently as th shivered under their thin blankets, and t youth as he strove to bring the primus life. She was like a silent bronze statue whi nothing could animate.

But suddenly there was a change. T instant she saw Safar, her brown face light up, the eyes opened wide, she flung up h hands and ran to him. She seized his ar pouring out a torrent of words, evident of the most moving character, but he threw h hand off impatiently, almost pushing h away with a rough, contemptuous movemer

Seeing his lowering face and grim ey she said something in pitiful tones, shiver and turned to the window, where she sto with her back to us, shoulders heaving, loo ing out into the mist which was envelopi the aul even more closely than before.

"Are you mountain-climbers?" I asked youth, who had put the primus down and wiping his hands on a piece of rag.

The girls laughed, their teeth chatteri

"We're anything you like! We're ge gists. Today we got stuck on the glacier— can't get warm any way. Got ourselves i the snow."

"Are you all here?"

"No, Mishka and Yuri stopped on the ot sector. If they don't come before night, w go and look for them."

"Is it very difficult to find them her

"Oh, no—just very cold, seems to go ri through you. And that rotten primus wo work. We asked her"—she pointed to mountain woman, who still had her back t ed—"where we could get burkas,[1] but can't understand a word of Russian."

At that moment Terentyev and the cha burst into the school, accompanied b mountaineer whom I did not know. Terent called him Akhmet.

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[1] The heavy woollen cloaks used by Cau sian mountaineers.

"Listen," I said to Terentyev, "you know the ropes here. Why should these young folk freeze when there's no need? Can't you get them some sort of burka or rug?"

Terentyev said something to Akhmet in Lezghin, and the latter called:

"Aishe!"

Aishe turned from the window, arms folded, listened to what Akhmet had to say, and then left the room without a word or a glance at anybody.

Terentyev told me that Akhmet had instructed her to bring something for the geologists. Then he squatted down by the primus, cleared it out with a needle, blew on it, shook it, and suddenly it began roaring and working like new.

"I'm a jack-of-all-trades," he said gaily. "These things know how to treat me with respect. I've got more primuses going than I would care to count!"

Aishe appeared dragging two burkas and a grey felt mat. The girls ran to get the burkas with cries of triumph.

As they rose, I saw that they were small, slender and agile. A kettle with a black spout was already standing on the primus, and the room looked a little more cosy, though the change was more apparent than real. Personally, I felt as though heavy snow might fall at any moment, the outside mist was so dense and cold.

"Well, we're going to Akhmet's," said Terentyev. "And you young folks, if you need anything come and look for us there. Glad that Safar's come, Aishe?" he unexpectedly asked the bronze girl, who had again taken up her post by the window, like a sentry.

He repeated the question in Lezghin. Aishe pressed her lips together, gave him a long, sorrowful look and went outside.

"What d'ye make of that!" said Terentyev, throwing out his hands. "We've brought her a visitor, and still she's not pleased. What have you been doing, Safar, what have you been up to now? Lord above, there's a black look for you! He's a wet blanket and so is she. Here's a nice mess... Never mind, it'll blow over! These things happen."

But Safar threw in something in Lezghin and all three laughed. I realized that he had laughed it off as usual with some coarse, spicy joke.

We left the school, while boys led our horses away. We climbed another street, practically blind in the thick fog.

"Watch your feet!" Terentyev kept telling me. "You never know what you may stumble over!"

"Comrade Terentyev, who's that Russian girl in the aul? We met her as we were coming in."

"Russian?" he repeated. "Oh, they're geologists! Those are the ones you mean, aren't they?"

"No, there was one standing on a balcony, in a grey dress and a shawl, not from these parts."

"Ah—I know who you mean! A bookkeeper came here not long ago to work at the carpet-making cooperative. After big money. Well, they won't find it so easy here! That must have been his wife. I don't know of anybody else. Attractive wench?"

"Well, I don't know your taste, I think she's remarkably good-looking."

"Oho!" he drawled. "Well, if that's so, she's got a bad time in store, unless she clears off to Akhta. Not so far from here. And what's up with Safar?" he asked, but just at that moment I stumbled, and hurt my foot.

"Careful, for heaven's sake, or you'll break a leg! Mind where you're going! God, it's as black as the devil's stovepipe! They get this sort of thing for a week on end here sometimes. A foul place, but the meadows are grand. Thousands of sheep in the collective farm. But what's Safar so quiet for?"

"Don't know," I replied. "Maybe he's thinking of his fiancée."

"His fiancée?" said Terentyev. "They'll have to drag him to her with a rope. He obeys his mother all right—they still have a matriarchal system here—but not as much as all that. Though it's girls he's got on his mind, that's true."

It was quite dark when we got to Akhmet's house. It would have been beyond me to say how big it was, since I could see nothing of it except the stairs leading to the balcony. We climbed up with the greatest caution and went into a room whose proportions already gave me a very good idea that the house was a large one. Once inside, I have to admit that I lay down upon a rug and fell asleep. My sleep did not last for long, however—Terentyev very politely wakened me.

"There's all night for sleeping," he said. "Now there's a grand khinkal [1] waiting for our attention. Come on!"

I knew that dish from experience and merely asked:

"Are the maize balls the size of my fist or larger?"

"You'll see," Terentyev replied, and we went into another room, still larger than the one where I had fallen asleep.

It was a typical kunatskaya, or living room. The walls were hung with ancient plates and dishes, various weapons, two posters on dairy farming, an oleograph of Susannah and the Elders, and in the corner, in a frame, a wonderful assortment of postcards with coloured pictures and portraits to which at first I paid no attention.

Separately, in a place of honour, hung small portraits of the country's leaders. I went to the tall window opening onto the balcony, but there was nothing to be seen beyond the endless, depressing fog, now deepening to the darkness of night.

I crossed the room and began looking at the postcards. Highlanders are very fond of such things in their living rooms—family portraits, placards, copies of pictures, oleographs, and cheap popular prints.

Here I found many views of towns, sea and mountain country. There were heads of women with pre-revolutionary coiffures, many portraits, mostly of people unknown to me, but including well-known writers,

[1] A Caucasian dish.

Memories of the Caucasus.
A picture by M. Lermontov

composers and military men. I could not understand what common link had brought them all together in the same frame, but Akhmet, who spoke a little Russian, touched my shoulder.

"They are all beautiful person!"

I realized that this "all beautiful person" was the reason for their selection, that they represented the personal taste of the master of the house. At that moment my eye lighted on a postcard with a portrait of Lermontov. For some reason, just as Akhmet said "beautiful person," Lermontov struck my eye, and a thrill ran through me. For those lines which had been haunting me the whole day—

And hear the curfew-shot without you,
When the day's work is done at last. . . .

were from one of his poems! Why, of course! I began trying to recall the whole poem, but at that moment the food was brought in and I was invited to take my seat.

We settled down on a carpet in the centre of the room, where there was plenty of space. Terentyev sat there with his jacket unbuttoned, looking like a Caucasian warrior of old; there was Safar, still grim and somewhat distrait, and relatives of our host—middle-aged mountaineers; there was my guide, the chaban, and one more Russian, a freckled unshaven man of uncertain age and limp movements. The mountaineers addressed him simply as Stepan and treated him with indifference.

"Who's that?" I asked Terentyev softly.

"It's that same bookkeeper who's come to work in the carpet co-operative to make money there. Look at the fat he's put on! Look at him staring at the khinkal, or maybe it's at the vodka," he added benignly.

We gave our attention to the khinkal. If anybody does not know what that is, to explain is easy, but the trouble is that every explanation will be somewhat inexact, as the dish varies slightly in different places. In Khevsuretia it is made one way, in Avaria another, in Lezghia yet a third. What we ate that evening was a thick garlic sauce in which we dipped small pieces of mutton, drinking mutton broth with it and eating small balls made of maize flour. The size of these balls differs in various places, ranging from a walnut to a clenched fist; even if you can eat them hot, they are too much for the most long-suffering European stomach when taken cold.

The garlic sauce was thick, hot and strong. Vodka was served in liberal quantities, and drunk out of tumblers, for lack of liqueur glasses. But the highlanders are a tough and hardy folk, and the vodka did not make the slightest impression on their iron physique. The women of the house only brought in the food and drink, and then modestly retired, in order not to disturb the men at their supper.

The ceremony of khinkal-eating proceeded with all the proper observances. All smacked their lips and wiped their hands on napkins lying on the carpet. We ate with our fingers. The conversation was slow, in both Russian and Lezghin. It was the hour of leisure.

Here, beyond the mountain peaks, the highly artistic and complicated toasts which reach their apotheosis in Georgia, were not customary; they were serious, jesting or coarse, but all short and simple.

As time passed, the vodka began to have its effect on the company, and they started telling or recalling the most comical stories.

I was quietly remembering Lermontov's verses, and the vodka seemed to have stimulated my memory, filled with the impressions of flocks and herdsmen. After an hour I was able to recall one verse, but do what I could, the remainder eluded me.

The men were bawling and roaring some local jokes, when the balcony door opened, and that same girl who had startled Safar and myself entered the room.

A paraffin lamp was hanging from a hook in the room, and in its light she looked like a vision from another world as she stood there in the doorway. A wisp of mist drifted into the room with her, and as the light of the lamp caught the minute particles of frost it contained, she seemed to be haloed in an ethereal, sparkling nimbus.

She stood motionless, mustering the com-
pany from head to foot. She was now wearing
a blue blouse and white skirt.

"Good evening, Natasha!" said Akhmet.

"So she's called Natasha," I thought,
and called to her: "Sit down, Natasha!
We're already acquainted, come and sit down
with us!"

But she kept her eyes on her husband,
sitting there in his shirt-sleeves, with his
thin tousled hair. A trickle of fat was run-
ning down his arm, and he was holding a tum-
bler of vodka, drinking it down as though
it were tea.

"Come on home, do you want to sit here
all morning!" said Natasha, her voice strid-
ent and irritated. "And then end by sleep-
ing in a ditch!"

Stepan glanced at her indifferently, drain-
ed his glass, picked up a maize ball, crushed
it, and stuffed it into his mouth.

"What'll I do at home?" he said, chewing
slowly. "I'm fed to the teeth with it there."

She made no reply, and turned to the door.
But Akhmet, who was light and quick in his
movements despite his dour and heavy build,
jumped up from the carpet.

"Natasha, don't be angry," he said with
warm sincerity, taking her hand politely
in his. "Come and sit here with us! Drink
our healths! Sit down, please!"

And she actually did sit down on the car-
pet, tucking her legs under her as the moun-
taineers do. She took a glass, half filled it with
vodka, then coloured it with cherry juice,
which we had not been using. She tossed it
off in a breath, and her eyes met those of Sa-
far, which were fixed, intense, as of one pos-
sessed. Something like a smile lightly touch-
ed her lips. She picked up a maize ball,
and courageously dipped it in the garlic sauce.

Now the highlanders began singing an
old Lezghin song. As they sang, they swayed
as though in the saddle, and though I under-
stood nothing of the words, the rhythm of
that drawn-out, melancholy, high-pitched
song brought vividly before me that valley
where the river foams, where the landslide
races down, where horsemen gathered for a
raid, where they fought and died.

The song was wildly beautiful. Terentyev
translated the words for me, but I had already
guessed the most of it, except for death in
battle. The highlander of whom it sang could
find no death, however he sought it. He had
been bewitched.

That song was followed by another, a merry,
humorous catch, and after that they drank
again and talked disconnectedly.

"Natasha," I said, "sing something of
yours, something Russian."

"I can't sing," she replied, simply and quiet-
ly. "It's true, I mean it, I'm not just pretend-
ing. I've no voice. Maybe you can sing?"

And bewitched by her smile, I did something
extraordinary. I said:

"Very well, but I'll sing some verses."

The highlanders unanimously applauded,
and I sang them those verses of Lermontov's
them which had been running through my
head all day, giving me no peace.

I sang in a terrible, desperately strained
voice, hoarse with vodka and the smoke of
campfires. To call it singing is wrong—I
croaked them in a grim recitative. And as I
did so, I felt as though all the essence of
this wonderful, confused mountain day enter-
ed into those lines which in no way answered to
either the time or the place. I sang the verse-
es like a romance repeating the third and
fourth lines of each:

When the day's work is done at last,
How often then I dream of you!
The empty sea I wander past
And hear the curfew-shot without you.
When its loud echo comes again
From the grey waters back to me,
I weep, worn out by sorrow's pain,
And long to perish in the sea!

I ended, eyes closed. I must have been
very ridiculous, and awaited a burst of laugh-
ter. None came.

"That's a good song, too!" said Akhmet
politely, and the mountaineers drank my
health.

Natasha was looking at the carpet as though
tracing its pattern with her eyes. Then Safar
jumped up and walked to the farthest cor-
ner of the room with what seemed to me a drun-
ken gait.

But that swaying step was the introduc-
tion to the Lezghinka, the stealthy, supple
movement that leads into the dance. Suddenly
he straightened up as though a spring had been
released, and moved round the circle looking
as I could never have imagined him to look,
so unlike was this strong, handsome man
the ordinary, rather limited youth I had
seen before me all day.

He danced as though nobody before him
had ever danced the Lezghinka, it was as
though he were telling his deepest, most
secret thoughts. Those were not the move-
ments of a man dancing to amuse onlookers,
or a skilled dancer using his art to arouse
amazement and admiration. It was the dance
of the primeval highlander telling in move-
ment that for which he had no words.

The mountaineers smacked their lips in
excitement and delight, while their palms
beat the rhythm like metal cymbals.

Safar moved so lightly and skilfully that
even the lamp never trembled when he was
beneath it. It may be that I had drunk too
much, but that dance held me utterly. While
Safar's legs were speaking, nobody took their
eyes off him. And so it was that we did not
see when Natasha stood up, whether it was at
the beginning of the dance or when it was
coming to its last frantic whirls. But when
Safar stopped suddenly, catching his breath
and stretching out his hand to the door, we
saw that she was already grasping the handle.

"It's very stuffy here," she said in the si-
lence.

But she did not go at once. She stood there
in front of Safar, her fingers crushing the han-
dle as though she would break it.

"Natasha!" said Safar, taking a step to-
wards her. "Dance with me! I shall remember
it all my life!"

Natasha looked at the window for some
reason, then said sharply:

"I can't! Better if I teach you ours."

"All right!" cried Safar.

"But not now! With you it's all in a mo-

ment! Like taking a jump into the river. Look out or you'll drown!"

A cloud of fog billowed into the room and concealed Natasha. Safar dashed after her, but the bang of the door told us that she was gone.

Wisps of mist drifted slowly about the room. The highlanders began singing something very melancholy that sent chills down my spine. Safar poured out a glass of vodka and drank it off as though it had been water.

I do not know how much time passed, as I sat smoking my pipe, watching the faces change under the flickering lights and shadows of the lamp. Suddenly I felt everything so quiet and kindly, and the room seemed warm, comfortable and friendly.

Safar rose and went out onto the balcony. Terentyev followed him with a swift step.

"Now the most interesting part's coming," I thought.

The mountaineers were smoking cigarettes, and Stepan was sitting, leaning against the wall. His forehead looked white as snow against the red and black of the rug. Drops of sweat glistened on his temples. I went up to the window beside the door. Terentyev and Safar were talking loudly, as though they were alone in the whole aul, interrupting each other. They were walking up and down the balcony as they talked, so that their words were now near, now distant, and I could not hear the whole conversation, only odd sentences.

"You must leave at once," said Terentyev. "I promised your dead father to look after you."

Then came several indistinguishable sentences, and I heard again:

"You're always the same. And your mother? And your fiancée in Miskinji?" And he went over into Lezghin.

Safar answered hotly, then his torrent of words changed into cursing in Russian, and he concluded:

"To the devil with my fiancée!"

They halted at the head of the stairs, and Terentyev repeated stubbornly in a heavy, dull voice:

"You must go away at once! I'll saddle your horse myself. He's right here in the yard. You must go!"

There was a heavy pause, then Safar answered in a desperate tone that made my flesh creep:

"It's no good! I can't go away from that woman. If I die for it, I can't leave that woman." And again he began talking Lezghin.

Terentyev was silent for a moment, then he spoke again, and his voice was muffled, fading away. Possibly he was talking to Safar as the latter followed him down the stairs I was not able to distinguish any more.

I looked out of the window. For some reason I now saw the yard bathed in a greenish light, as though it were at the bottom of the sea. I heard the ring of bit and bridle. They were saddling the horse together.

Then there was a scraping of stones, the shadow of a horseman crossed the yard, and the beat of hoofs faded away into the distance. "Could they both have gone?" I thought, but in the same moment the door opened, and Terentyev entered the room wi its wreathing spirals of smoke.

He came straight to me, without payi any attention to the highlanders. One them was dozing, another telling Akhm something in a whisper; the chaban was tryi to read some paper or other which he ke raising above his head to see the lines bett in the feeble light of the lamp, the chimn of which was black with smoke.

Terentyev smelt of vodka and tobacc His blue eyes held a wise, disdainful expre sion, as though he wanted to assure me that knew everything about life, had seen ever thing and could no longer be surprised at an thing.

"Here's a dyushyush!" he said, th seeing me taken aback, added hastily: "Ye I forgot that you don't know the languag I said, here's an adventure!"

He was silent.

"Well," he continued, "I've got him o of the way of trouble. Let him gallop off, th paths are bad there, he'll have a chan to cool down a bit. But what are you thin ing?" he continued as though arguing wi me, although I had not contradicted him any way. "He's a good lad, I'm mighty for of him, but he's had bad luck. He wanted be a metallurgist, and turned out as a veteri ary. He oughtn't to drink! But as for he you're right, she's the devil and that's a We've been hotheads in our time too. Yout I tell you. . . On a night like this I. . .

He waved his hand and left me, steppir carefully over the legs of sleepers, and bega trimming the wick in the lamp.

I looked at the remains of our feast. Th tablecloth spread out over the carpet w littered with fragments of broken mai bread, bits of meat, and overturned glasse I went over to the wall where the red dolma of a lieutenant of Hussars could be vague seen in a glazed frame.

I looked at the gold braid, the crude coloured features. "Beautiful person," th highlander had said about him. I sudden felt I could not stay in that room. The agit tion which had been smouldering in me a day like the embers of a campfire flared i in a desperate urge to be alone. I did not wa to see anybody about me. I opened the do resolutely and stepped out onto the balcon

There was no longer any mist. The aul w bathed in the greenish rays of the moo Straight in front of me, as though descendir into the next house, hung a gigantic glacie The numerous buildings of the aul stretch above and below me like some miniature Bab lon, every stone visible. In a shed in o corner of the yard, the horses neighed in the sleep.

The fathomless sky was studded with whi stars. The sides of those mighty pyrami towering over the aul opposite, rosy by da now gleamed faintly green, while the snc at the glacier tops shone white.

I was gripped by the enchantment of th night. Slowly I descended the creaking ste into the yard and went out through the gat

Quietly I passed down the narrow, emp street, beneath the silent balconies, pa ancient stone boundaries and tumble-dov

walls. Somewhere a dog barked, and further down a group of people stooping under heavy sacks cut across my path. I guessed that these were the geologists who had found their comrades and were coming back to the aul with them. I could hear their weary voices and heavy footsteps. I waited until they had disappeared, and quietness reigned again.

Through that cold nocturnal silence I wandered like some wayfarer who wishes to be alone with the night, and needs nothing more. Life existed somewhere down below, far beneath that village, deserted and given over to the moon, the eternal ice and the stars. I seated myself on a stone and surrendered to my thoughts, wondering at the simple austerity of that wild spot.

I began to feel as though I were living in several epochs. Around me were houses like those of Babylon; there, in the living room, highlanders dressed as they were in Shamil's[1] time were sitting on an old Lezghin carpet and talking quietly; down below in the school strong young lads and girls who had nothing to do with these old walls were preparing to sleep; along deserted paths Safar was racing, driving away his longing with the wild night gallop; Natasha was sitting at home, she who had been tossed from her distant Russian town to the very mountain tops, sitting there waiting for her drunken husband, while he with dribbling lips drank off another glass of vodka—who could say how many he had had before?—and was it not for shame of him that she had hidden herself here, in this wilderness?

What I am writing about now took place ten years ago, and as I sat there on the stone, I thought that hardly would I come a second time to that place on such a cruel moonlit night, or again experience all that had given me that confused, agitating day.

When the day's work is done at last. . . .
When the day's work is done at last. . . .

At the camps, watchdogs were sleeping, their chins resting on the small mounds they had dug up, in order the better to hear all that happened during the night. And only the rams could cross freely from one herd to another. The shepherds, too, were sleeping, wrapped in a scrap of rug, while the embers smouldered in the dying fires.

I felt cold, and rose from the stone. Again I began wandering through the streets and lanes, up and down stone steps, repeating over and over again the same word in Lezghin: "Ier—good!" The short, light syllable was in tune with the cold ethereal sense of that unique night. Ier!

I glanced at the house before me and recogized the pillars of the balcony, the carvings which were etched in my memory.

It was Natasha's house. The balcony was empty. I could see every crack on the pillars, and I pictured her standing there, as she had been when she had startled Safar and myself.

I stood there like a fool staring at the house. It was small, old, poor. Shutters were over all the windows. A shadow, almost black lay over the balcony. Something clanged there. I listened. The faint sound came again. I approached, peered into the darkness, and saw a horse tethered to a pillar.

It seemed familiar to me. I came close up, and saw that it was Safar's horse, dapple-grey. And the saddle-bags were his, those bright-coloured saddle-bags, which I had so coveted. Safar had not gone very far!

Dead silence reigned all around, so profound that I almost fancied that the rays of the moon gave forth a faint yellow ring.

I stroked the horse's mane. It looked at me, then began noisily sniffing my hands—evidently Safar was in the habit of bringing it tidbits. I left the square, and went up again to Akhmet's house. Suddenly I saw a woman sitting on a stone, lost to the world, staring at some spot on the mountain, at the tall pyramids and their gleaming glaciers.

Her bronze face was rigid and motionless, lips pressed together. Her hands lay on her knees, as though she were listening intently to some sound audible to her alone. It was Aishe. She did not stir as I approached. Tears were rolling down her brown cheeks, but she sat there motionless.

I passed her, glancing back once again at the little house and the horse, then went on quickly. When I arrived, all the mountaineers were sleeping. Stepan had fallen asleep where he sat, leaning against the wall, without even covering himself, and was snoring loudly. I did not want to waken Terentyev, who was sleeping soundly. I found my short cloak in a corner, wrapped it round me and immediately fell asleep.

Translated by Eve Manning

[1] Leader of mountain Mahomedans, who raised the "Holy War" against the tsarist government (1797-1871).

NIKOLAI GOGOL

Gogol, who was born on April 1st, 1809, grew up in the beautiful Ukrainian countryside amongst the simple Ukrainian people. His parents, modest landowners in Poltava region, lived on the small Vassilyevo estate where life was peaceful and easy and followed all patriarchal customs and habits. Here the impressive, sensitive boy first learned to love the ancient past of the Ukrainian people, their fascinating folklore and legends, their inimitable humour. Already as a child he felt the charm of the countryside, listened enraptured to the mournful songs of the peasants, revelled in the joy of their popular festivals.

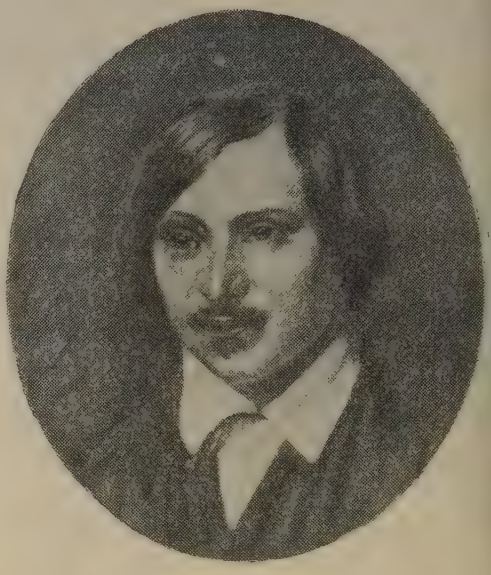
Here also the young Gogol first entered the world of art. His father was the author of plays written for amateur performances and based on popular legends and folklore. Gogol junior, was an admiring spectator at those merry performances.

The school years spent in the Nyezhin Lyceum gave a new turn to his youthful aspirations; in the Lyceum Gogol started a handwritten magazine in which he published his own first attempts at writing. As a player in the school theatre he displayed great comic talent, giving a brilliant impersonation of the shrewish old wife of a landowner in Fonvisin's comedy *The Minor*.

Gogol devoted his leisure hours to acquiring a closer and more intimate knowledge of the life of the people. He listened to the songs of the blind bandore-players, talked with the villagers, noted their every word and absorbed the beauty of their dialect. All these impressions were firmly photographed on the mind of the future writer, to reappear later in vivid, colourful portraits.

However, neither books nor the theatre, nor his first incursion into the realms of literature could satisfy the mental strivings of this ardent youth. He longed for a life of fruitful social activities, of a wide field of endeavour, all for the good of his homeland. "Long, long ago, from my earliest, almost incomprehending years," he wrote to a friend, "I burned with the desire to make my life useful for the good of the country... I gave due consideration to all government offices and posts, and made my choice—jurisprudence. This, I believed, offered the widest field of work, and here I could indeed be useful and bring true benefit to mankind. Injustice—the world's greatest misfortune—pained my heart more than anything. And I vowed not to waste a minute of my life without doing good."

With these dreams of public activities Gogol hastened to Petersburg immediately upon graduating from the Lyceum in 1828. But the northern capital offered a cold reception to the naive youth who had expected that all doors would open before him and he would soon see fulfillment of his noble plans. Instead, the drab and difficult life of a petty clerk in a large city, a life full of privations, fell to his lot. The preacher's tribune had to give way to the government departmental office and the statesman's dress-suit to the modest uniform of a small government official.



Nikolai Gogol. Portrait by A. Ivanov

Gogol soon tired of the routine, soulless work in the department and he essayed his fortune as a pedagogue and lecturer. At the same time he renewed his literary efforts interrupted after graduation from the Lyceum. And here Gogol found his true vocation. In 1830 he published his first story *St. John's Eve* and in 1831, under the pseudonym "Beekeeper Rudy Panko" he published a collection of stories of Ukrainian life entitled *Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka*.

"I changed my office and occupation many times before I realized where my true calling lay," wrote Gogol. "But as soon as I felt that I could also serve my country as a writer, I gave up everything: my former positions, Petersburg, and the society of dear friends ... in order to prove that I was also a citizen of my country and eager to serve her. . . ."

Gogol was firm in his resolution to place his art at the service of the public. Writer and Citizen, he entered Russian literature as a fighter for truth in life and art, as a reformer and passionate accuser, exposing

and ridiculing the seamy sides of life. Gogol was the founder of the Russian school of realism which gave the world such masters of fiction as Dostoyevsky, Goncharov, Saltykov-Shchedrin, Grigorovich and Leo Tolstoy. This highly important trend in Russian literature, initiated by Gogol, has come to be known as the Gogol trend, and the years in which Gogol lived and worked are called by Russian critics "the Gogol period of Russian literature."

Nikolai Vassilievich Gogol produced his works during one of the darkest periods in Russian history: the thirties and forties of the past century were years of black reaction. The people groaned under the yoke of serfdom. Darkness and ignorance prevailed in the oppressed Russian countryside.

Love of homeland and the ardent desire to see her free and happy inspired Gogol to use the colourful and powerful language in which he portrayed Russia and Russian life. Like Pushkin, Lermontov and Tolstoy, Gogol is one of the greatest representatives of the patriotic tradition in Russian literature. It was not accidental that in an article devoted to Pushkin, Gogol wrote: "At the very mention of the word Russia, our poet's eyes brighten, his horizon widens and he himself seems to acquire grandeur and appear bigger than the ordinary human being. Indeed, this is more than ordinary love of homeland."

The same passionate feeling also burned in the soul of Gogol from early childhood. Maybe that is why, surrounded by the vices and injustices of his time, he chose to become a satirist. Here he was able to apply his innate humour and wit, his love for sharp and poignant folk expressions.

Once Gogol visited the printshop where his first book *Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka* was being printed. The young writer was surprised to note that the typesetters were making with suppressed laughter. Apologizing for the behaviour of his employees, the printer confessed to Gogol that the workers were roaring with laughter when setting his book.

This book opened to the reader a new world hitherto unknown in literature. It portrayed the life of a people with all its wisdom and humour, its fantasies and legends, and heroic past. The stories are a charming combination of mirth and wistfulness, of colourful portraits drawn from life and imaginary fantasies, of bitter truth and tender lyricism. The reader follows the love story of the beautiful Parasya and the young Cossack Gritsko whose love never weakens in spite of the efforts made to spoil it by the girl's shrewish stepmother Hivrya in *The Sorotchintsy Fair*; and the mixture of fantasy and grim truth in the poetical *A May Night or the Drowned Maiden* in which the nymphs dance on the moon-flooded pond and the old gallant, the village "mayor" vainly tries to separate the wooer Ganna from his ardent son Levko; and the adventures of the unfortunate devil from the daring blacksmith Vakula forces to his service and rides bareback to Petersburg to beg a pair of high-heeled slippers for his sweetheart from the tsarina (*Christmas Eve*) and the masterly written story of the old man from whom the "evil one" has stolen his hat with an important document concealed in the lining (*The Lost Letter*). Warm sympathy is aroused by the half-legendary tale of the battle waged by the fearless Ukrainian Danilo Gurulbash against the enemies of his homeland (*A Terrible Revenge*).

Gogol's tales are enriched by their vivid expressive language, and the inimitable Ukrainian humour. The pages are studded with precious gems, fragments of the ancient poetical legends of the Ukrainian people reworked and elaborated by the brilliant imagination of the great writer. Here, for instance, is an excerpt from *A May Night or the Drowned Maiden*:

"Do you know the Ukrainian night? Oh, you do not know the Ukrainian night! Look at it: the moon looks out from the centre of the sky; the immense dome of heaven stretches away, more inconceivably immense than ever; it glows and breathes; the earth is bathed in silvery light; and the exquisite air is refreshing, warm and voluptuous, and an ocean of fragrance is in motion. Divine night! Enchanting night! The woods motionless, mysterious, and full of gloom, cast huge shadows. Calm and still lie the ponds. The cold and darkness of their waters are gloomily walled in by the dark, green gardens. The virginal thickets of wild cherry timidly dip their roots into the cold of the water and from time to time murmur in their leaves, as though angry and indignant when the sweet rogue—the night wind—steals up suddenly and kisses them. The countryside is sleeping. But overhead all is breathing, all is marvellous, triumphal. And the soul is full of the immensity and the marvel; and silvery visions rise up in harmonious multitudes from its depths. Divine night! Enchanting night! And suddenly everything springs to life: the woods, the ponds and the steppes. The glorious clamour of the Ukrainian nightingale bursts upon the night and one fancies the moon itself is listening in midheaven. . . ."

But already in this first volume, full of tender merriment and joy of life, there is a story showing the other side of the medal. Here we can easily recognize Gogol, the future satirist, the merciless accuser of triviality and spiritual poverty. The story *Ivan Fyodorovich Shponka and his Aunt* is a short but masterful sketch of provincial life. In describing the small landowner Shponka and his neighbours, Gogol launches his first attack against the hateful, indolent and sluggish provincial dwellers. With a few, well-chosen strokes he reveals the full depth of degradation to which man sinks when his life is devoid of lofty aims. Such, too, in the main are the characters described in his next book, *Mirgorod*.

Mirgorod is a small town in the Ukraine—the home of the writer—which to him personified the backwardness and boredom of life in the provinces, forgotten by God and man. The tenor of life here is uneventful and monotonous: there is no place for strong feelings or stirring events, no food for the mind or for flights of fantasy. The well-fed, snug philistines have no goal to hurry to, no problems to solve; they have become accus-

tomed to the sleepy monotony of their days, from generation to generation. Petty quarrels and silly gossip take the place of action and deeds. It seems as if even the Ukrainian countryside has suddenly lost its gay colours and instead of the fragrant, blossoming villages, full of wonderful lyricism, the reader sees a new landscape with "wet crows and ravens, monotonous rain and a grey, weeping sky," and the famous Mirgorod puddles.

Instead of the poetical pictures of the *Evenings* the reader sees the fusty comfort in the home of the idyllic couple Afanassi Ivanovich and Pulkherya Ivanovna (*Old-Fashioned Gentry*) and finds himself in a circle where "no desire goes beyond the fence surrounding their estate." Before him flash the disgusting physiognomies of the Mirgorod residents, the absurd figures of Ivan Ivanovich and Ivan Nikiforovich with their comic quarrel and incredible lawsuit (*How the Two Ivans Quarrelled*).

We see how the smile fades from the author's face as he writes this book. "It is gloomy in this world, gentlemen!" he concludes in his story of how the two landed proprietors quarrelled. And we begin to understand that the fathomless night of the old Russian provinces plunged the author into despair, he understood that his laughter had to become bitter and searing. His noble heart of a citizen bled in grief and alarm. That is how Gogol's "laughter through tears", which permeates most of the works of the great Russian satirist, was born.

Almost simultaneously with *Mirgorod* Gogol wrote a series of stories of Petersburg life. In these we meet a gallery of personages of a type new to Gogol. Here is the stupid, self-satisfied Petersburg citizen—the German Schiller: "Not the Schiller who wrote *William Tell* and *The History of the Thirty Years' War*, but the famous Schiller, the ironmonger and tinsmith of Meshchansky Street."

"He (Schiller) set himself the aim of saving a capital of fifty thousand in the course of ten years, and all this was as certain and as unalterable as fate . . . if the price of potatoes went up much above the ordinary he did not spend one halfpenny more on them but simply diminished the amount he consumed."

His German accuracy "went so far that he made it his rule to kiss his wife twice in the twenty-four hours but no more."

And when drunk, Schiller seriously proposes to cut off his own nose as the habit of taking snuff forces him to spend 20 rubles 40 kopeks yearly. In short, rude and stupid, greedy and precise, Schiller is portrayed as the typical representative of that category of German shopkeepers common to all times.

Another colourful figure of a Petersburg resident is Lieutenant Pirogov from the story *The Nevsky Prospect*. Like a moth he flits through life, drinking its simple pleasures. Nothing can disturb his peace of mind and even after being beaten and thrown out of a strange apartment by a jealous husband, Pirogov visits a cafe, eats two pastries and regains his usual sang-froid.

A different fate awaits those unreconcile to their lot, who dare to ponder over life problems. Cruel disappointment awaits th dreamers. Tragedy is the result of the arti Piskarev's search for the phantom of happ ness which beckoned to him from the ey of a beautiful girl; insanity is the fa of the impoverished government offici Poprishchin who cannot understand wh all the good things in life are reserved onl for the courtiers and generals; death ove takes the unfortunate clerk Akaki Akakyevic Bashmachkin who had no other wish in li than the purchase of a new overcoat.

With warm sympathy Gogol describes the small people who suffocated in the atmo phere of lies and tyranny surrounding then Gogol issues a passionate appeal in favour the "small man", his words ring with lov and sympathy for the downtrodden. Th stories *The Overcoat* and *A Madman's Diar* marked the beginning of a series of grea works in Russian literature, warmed by hu man love for the "insulted and injured."

Outstanding among Gogol's sketches Petersburg life is *The Portrait* in which th fantastic element does not detract from th truly realistic nature of this story, that po es the question of freedom in creative wor of the corrupting influence of money an the fate of talent in a world of evil and hypo risy. As soon as the young, talented arti Chertkov ceases to paint as his imaginatio dictates, and adapts his brush to the tast and demands of his clients, his pictures lo the freshness and originality that was the greatest charm and gradually become th stereotyped works of a mere artisan. Cher kov's tragedy is conveyed with convincin truth and force by the author. In the en Chertkov devotes his wealth, the earnin of long years of work, to purchasing canvas by young, talented painters, and in a fit blind and futile envy destroys them. . .

Revizor or *Inspector-General* is based an incident which was said to have actual taken place in one of the remote, neglec ed corners of the old Russian provinces. Th officials of this small town are expecting th arrival of an "inspector-general" from Peter burg. From fear that the jobbery and arbitr riness which have reigned in the town f years will at last be exposed, they take t first traveller who arrives from the capit to be the inspector, although he is only accidental wayfarer held up by lack of mone The affairs of this young rascal promise go well as the "elders of the town", in terr before this imaginary high authority, v with each other in striving to please him a shower gifts upon him. In the course of t action, in the open talk of the officials abo the coming misfortune, in the desire of ea to save himself at the expense of the others, the cowardly cringing before this clever swin ler, who is quick to benefit by the misu derstanding, the corruption of provinci officialdom, which has built up its we being by shameless abuse of power, is sple didly revealed.

The characters are drawn with remarkab

[1] The title of Dostoyevsky's famous nov

force and talent. The whole town is in the hands of Anton Antonovich, the mayor, who celebrates his birthday twice a year in order to receive as many gifts as possible from the local merchants. The police-officer Derzhimorda "keeps order by giving a black eye to every one—innocent and guilty." The fat shyster Zemlyanika is charged with the guardianship of the "charity institutions"; the patients in the hospitals under his charge look more like blacksmiths, and medicines are not used there at all because: "They are simple people: if they are to die, they'll die anyhow, if they are to recover, they'll recover anyhow." The town judge Lyapkin-Tyapkin considers it quite natural to accept bribes in the form of borzoi puppies. The postmaster's favourite amusement is to read other people's letters, retaining the most interesting ones as keepsakes.

In the centre of the comedy is the pseudo inspector-general, the official Hlestakov, whose chief quality is an inordinate love of boasting, enabling him very rapidly to fall in with his assumed role. The scene in which Hlestakov, drunk with wine and with his accidental power rants about Petersburg life before the amazed provincials, is remarkable for the subtle psychological treatment.

Gogol's comedy was first produced in the Alexandrinsky Theatre in Petersburg during the spring of 1836, and later in the Maly Theatre in Moscow. It was an immediate and unusual success, although opinions differed widely. In government circles the play called forth an outburst of indignation: it was correctly interpreted as a sharp condemnation of the entire administrative system built on arbitrariness, corruption and deceit.

"Everybody is against me," wrote Gogol. "Old and respectable officials scream that nothing is sacred to me if I dare to speak like that about those in government service; the police are against me; the merchants are against me. . . They rail, and go to the play. . . It is impossible to get tickets now for the fourth performance."

Gogol suffered much from these attacks and the endless discussions which arose around his work. He tired of life amongst ill-wishers, in the oppressive atmosphere of persecution. In the summer of 1836 he went abroad. He travelled much in Europe, visiting Paris, Vienna, and finally settling in Rome where he continued to work on his greatest book *Dead Souls* already begun in Russia.

On a certain occasion at the end of the forties Gogol was travelling from Moscow to Kaluga with a friend. At that time there were no railways in Russia and the couple travelled "by mail coach". While waiting for a change of horses at one of the post stations, Gogol's companion glanced through the traveller's book and read an amusing and stupid complaint made by a certain gentleman. Gogol listened and then asked:

"And what sort of a man do you think this gentleman is? What is his character?"

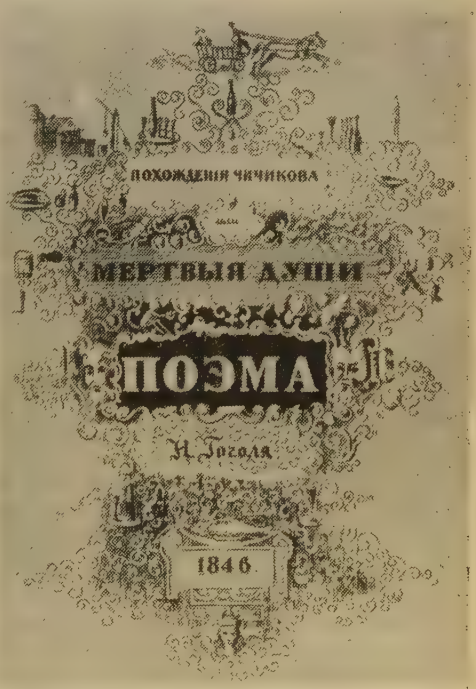
"I am sure I don't know," answered his fellow-traveller.

"Well, I will tell you. . . ."

Here Gogol proceeded most seriously to describe, first, the external appearance of this gentleman, then his character and habits; next he gave a fairly detailed description of his entire official career, and finally, even, re-enacted certain episodes from his life. Gogol's companion laughed till the tears ran from his eyes, although the narrator himself remained perfectly serious.

This episode showed Gogol's remarkable ability of "reading human nature", his brilliant talent of re-creating a human character in all its shades by one or two clever strokes. This quality is shown with particular force in *Dead Souls*, one of the greatest books in Russian literature which took Gogol nearly 17 years to write.

Gogol heard of a certain enterprising gentleman who purchased from landowners lists of names of peasant serfs long dead. The enterprising fellow presented these as living persons and obtained from the Treasury loans against the security of these "dead souls". On the basis of this anecdote Gogol painted a magnificent, gigantic canvas, reflecting the life of the Russian landowners in the early part of the past century. *Dead Souls* contains a satirical gallery of social types from almost all walks of Russian life, drawn with consummate skill and vision. In a long line, one after the other, the ugly figures of the landed proprietors and officials of old Russia pass before the reader. The writer has spared no colours to paint his heroes: the governor, whose only occupation is framework bead embroidery; the police prefect who regards the local merchants' shops as his own warehouse; the chairman of the court of exchequer who closes the sitting several hours before



Cover for Dead Souls, *drawn by Gogol*

the scheduled time in order to lunch with friends. These are the representatives of provincial power, whose only occupations are to swindle the public and play cards.

Still more expressively depicted are the landowners. The mawkishly polite and stupidly sentimental, thriftless dreamer Manilov, with eyes sweet as sugar; Nozdryov, brawler, drunkard and scandal-monger; the cunning and miserly swindler Sobakevich who resembles a bear; Korobochka, the landowner's wife, greedy and stupid; the extraordinary gourmand Pietukh, the disgusting miser Plushkin, who collects old rags and nails in the street, while sacks of grain rot in his warehouses—such are the landed proprietors portrayed by Gogol. As a matter of fact, these physical and moral degenerates, terrible in their mental limitation, were the "dead souls" of the old Russia of nobles and serf-owners, against whom Gogol directed the shafts of his satire.

The central figure is the sharp businessman Chichikov, permeated to the exclusion of all else by the thirst for acquisition, given up to the fulfillment of his commercial enterprise—to purchase the "souls" of the dead serfs from the neighbouring landowners.

In *Dead Souls* we are struck by the writer's ability to reveal the most essential features of his characters, to expose the triviality of their existence and their desires by means of an insignificant detail, of what at first seems a sketch of secondary importance.

For instance, the landowner Korobochka, true to the ancient customs of the serf estates, wishing to gratify her guest, suggests sending one of her servants . . . to tickle the guest's soles before sleep, or again, the reckless Nozdryov, angry with Chichikov, gives orders not to provide any oats for his guest's horses: "give them hay." Touched by Chichikov's seeming kindness, the miser Plushkin decides to offer him a stale rusk which has been saved for a special occasion for several months. Each of these characteristic details—and there are hundreds in the book—invests the story with the utmost expressiveness.

In *Dead Souls*, as in *Inspector-General* Gogol condemns and ridicules not only those of the heroes' characteristics arising from their social standing and conditions of the epoch, he likewise exposes all human shortcomings in the treatment of which he displays boundless knowledge of the human soul. Thus, in portraying Manilov, he holds up to ridicule not only a thriftless landlord and provincial schemer but a typical foolish dreamer, a man with no understanding of life or people, who is inevitably well-disposed towards all, be they honest men or swindlers. Plushkin is the incarnation of avarice; for brilliancy of portrayal Gogol's Plushkin stands on a level with Molière's Harpagon and Balzac's Gobseck.

The writer himself says about one of his characters—Nozdryov:

"There are people who have a passion for playing nasty tricks on their neighbours, sometimes without the slightest provocation. . . Nozdryov also had this strange passion. The more intimate anyone was with him, the readier he was to do him a ba turn: he would spread the most incredibl tales which would have been hard to beat fo silliness, upset a wedding or a business tran saction and all the while would be far fro regarding himself as your enemy; on the con trary, if accident brought you together again he would behave in a most friendly way an even say: "You wretch, you never come t see me."

Gogol's characters are vivid social an artistic generalizations of certain huma types. Each is not only a portrait of a give defect of human nature, but may stand a a symbol of an entire category of peopl Hlestakov, Nozdryov, Manilov, Sobakev ich, Plushkin, Korobochka are household words in Russia, used in daily conversation in the political struggle and in literary polem ics.

In his works, Gogol pilloried the serf sy tem. He depicted the ugly, repulsive face the ruling class of landowners. The pictur which he drew stirred the minds of peopl forced them to think, to look around. T use the expression of one of Gogol's con temporaries:

"*Dead Souls* stirred the whole of Russia. These words belong to Alexander Herzen, representative of the young, democratic Ru sia which saw in Gogol an ally, an artist crea ing works of immense critical force. Th merciless truth of Gogol's satire helpe some of the best Russians in their figh against the feudal-serf system which chaine the mighty forces of the Russian peopl

The theme of the people, of Russia, ru like a red thread through the whole of th book, lending it a profound lyrical note, i fecting the reader with that belief in a bri liant future which always lived in the hea of Gogol. In the lyric digressions devoted recollections of youth, in descriptions his native landscapes, in his discussion the beauty and grandeur of the Russian la guage or the diligence of the Russian peasan in his direct appeals to Russia—we hear th voice of boundless love of the homeland, th bright image of which was besmirched b the darkness of ignorance and misfortun

Thus, describing the path travelled by Ch chikov, the writer suddenly recalls his ow distant home. Living at that time in Ital he addresses the following words to his n tive land, words full of boundless love an devotion:

"Russia, Russia! I behold thee from m lovely faraway paradise, I behold thee! In thee all is open, desolate, flat; thy low towns lie scattered like dots, like spec unseen among thy plains; there is nothin to attract or captivate the eye. But wh mysterious, inexplicable force draws o to thee? Why does the mournful song th floats over the length and breadth of th from sea to sea echo unceasingly in the ea What is it in that song? What is it that ca and sobs and clutches at my heart? What a these strains that so poignantly greet m that go straight to my soul, that throb abo my heart? Russia! . . What wouldst th of me? What is the mysterious hidden bo between us?. . .

And still in perplexity, I stand motionless; nd already a threatening cloud, heavy with oming rain, looms above my head, and hought is numb before thy vast expanse. What loes that immense expanse foretell? Is it not ere, is it not in thee that limitless thought will arise since thou thyself art boundless. . . .

Is it not here there should be giants where here is space for them to develop and move reely?"

In the closing lines of the first volume of his book the writer speaks of the fondness or quick riding, inherent in every Russian, of the Russian troika, where "there is nothing elaborate one would think, about thy construction" made by the skilful hands of the simple Yaroslavl peasant:

"The driver wears no German top boots; he has a beard and gauntlets, and sits upon goodness knows what; but when he stands up and swings his whip and sets up a song—the horses fly like a whirlwind, the spokes of the wheels are blended into one revolving disc, the road quivers. . . ."

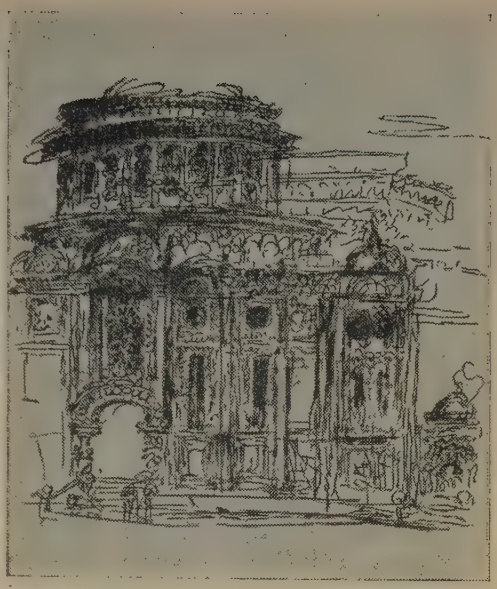
From this image of the troika, Gogol passes on to a description of his country, painting her development as swift and irresistible, like the flight of the troika.

"And, Russia, are not thou, too, flying onwards like a spirited troika that nothing can overtake? The road is smoking under thee, the bridges rumble, everything recedes and is left behind! The onlooker stands still, enthralled by the divine miracle: is it not a flash of lightning from heaven? What is the meaning of this terrifying onrush? What mysterious force is concealed in this troika, never seen before? Ah, horses, horses—what horses! Is the whirlwind hidden under your manes? Is there some delicate sense tingling in every vein? They hear the familiar song over their heads—at once in unison they strain their iron chests and scarcely touching the earth with their hoofs are transformed almost into straight lines flying through the air—and the troika rushes on, full of divine inspiration. . . Russia, whither flyest thou? Answer! She gives no answer. The ringing of her bells melts into music; the splintered air whirls and rushes like the wind, all things on earth go flying by, and the other states and nations, with looks askance, make way for her and draw aside."

At the end of 1833, Gogol wrote to a friend: "Now I am engrossed in the history of our dear, poor Ukraine. Nothing soothes so much as history."

The fruit of these labours was an unfinished work dedicated to the past of the Ukraine, and two historical novels *A Terrible Revenge* (included in the volume *Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka*) and *Taras Bulba*. The latter was written almost simultaneously with the *Inspector-General* and was completed by the time the first volume of *Dead Souls* appeared.

It cannot be mere accident that Gogol, while writing his great satire revealing "the triviality of a trivial soul," was simultaneously engaged on a historical novel reproducing the heroic events and people of the far distant past. Apparently, while exposing his contemporaries, Gogol wished at the same time,



A sketch by Gogol, made during the last years of his life

to draw a vast canvas portraying these heroic figures and great characters which he could not find in his own surroundings. These images he found in the history of his country, in the valiant struggle of the Ukrainian Cossacks for their national independence, for the proud traditions of the glorious Zaporozhian Setch (Dnieper Cossack Settlement of the 16th century).

In *Taras Bulba* Gogol has given us a glowing picture of a great national epic in the form of one of the most vivid and tragic episodes in the history of the Ukraine—the Cossack struggles against foreign invaders in the 16-17th centuries.

Profound drama fills this wonderful work, the drama of great patriotism and of the sacred bonds of comradeship, of the implacable human will, of devotion to duty and disdain of treachery. With his own hand the old Cossack Bulba kills his young son who betrayed his friends and country for the love of a beautiful Polish woman. And with paternal pride, bravely stifling the pain in his heart, the same Bulba watches another of his sons stoically bearing the infernal tortures inflicted upon him by the enemy. In answer to the call of the young Cossack, who is losing his self-control under the fearful torment: "Father! Where are you? You hear?" a ringing answer comes from the crowd: "I hear!" Thus the father, at the risk of being captured and also put to the torture, sends his last words of support and encouragement to his dying son. . . .

In this historical work Gogol, in his own words, strove to prove how a nation had been formed in the Ukraine, "original in character and military in exploits, which for three centuries had been fighting for its rights and had been staunchly defending its religion." Before the reader are unfolded picture after picture of life in the old Ukraine, the home life of the honoured Cossack, Colonel Taras Bulba

(the prototype for whom the author found in Bogdan Khmelnitsky, hero of the wars of liberation, or in one of his contemporaries); the wild life of the Dnieper Cossack settlement with its peculiar customs and habits; the battle scenes, describing in great detail the military art of the Dnieper Cossacks, the structure of their armies, their armaments and methods of battle; episodes from the naval campaigns of the Cossacks who reached the shores of Asia Minor in their many-oared vessels.

The sweeping strokes with which these pictures are painted, the saga-like style of the work which in places consists of an artistic translation of old popular legends and songs—all this enables the critic Belinsky to say that "*Taras Bulba* is part of a great epic in the life of a whole people. If a Homeric epic is possible in our time, then here we have the finest example, the ideal and prototype." Belinsky's opinion was shared by Sainte-Beuve who called *Taras Bulba* the "Illiad of the Dnieper".

Like a true artist Gogol was exceedingly exacting in the demands he made upon himself, and upon his own creative work. The rough drafts of his works, criss-crossed by countless corrections and changes, retain the traces of intense research, of midnight hours spent in thought, the eternal dissatisfaction of the true master. The number of manuscripts which he consigned to the flames, including finished novels, comedies and dramas—the fruits of many years' labour—bear witness to his unusual exactitude, to his endless striving for perfection.

On one occasion Gogol asked the famous poet Zhukovsky to listen to a reading of his new play on Ukrainian life. Gogol began to read immediately after dinner, i. e., the time when Zhukovsky, who was no longer young, liked to doze. Unable to resist this habit, Zhukovsky quietly dozed off while listening to Gogol. After a time, he opened his eyes.

"You see, Vassili Andreevich," said Gogol, "I wanted your opinion on my work. Your sleep is the best criticism you could offer."

With these words, the writer consigned the manuscript to the flames.

The first volume of *Dead Souls* which appeared in 1842, marked the apex of Gogol realistic art. During the last ten years his life (1842-1852) he wrote nothing equal this masterpiece. Those were yea of cruel mental torment and unsuccessf effort. Sickly and sensitive by nature, Gogo towards the end of his life, fell into a sta of spiritual vacillations and religious myst cism. He suddenly began to believe those wh called his works a calumny on Russian lif and to doubt his own right as an artis accuser. Gogol condemned his activiti as a satirist as being opposed to religio and renounced some of his best books. Wit feverish haste he sat down to work on th second volume of *Dead Souls*, trying find new heroes, men of positive ideals the same social surroundings. But the cha acters which he sought to create were n drawn from actual life and proved pale an unconvincing. Gogol realized this. Aga and again he threw the manuscript into th flames, only to begin again, and again give up

Oppressed by these failures and fearin that he would not have time to express h new thoughts, Gogol turned to publicism He compiled a book: *Correspondence Wit Friends* which is full of painful recantatio and negation of his artistic work in the hop less attempt to become reconciled with th surrounding reality, to find some justifica tion for the latter. This book, calling Russi back instead of forward, and clearly bearin the traces of a serious mental malady, wa severely condemned by all progressive peop who but a little while before had bowed befo Gogol's artistic genius.

However, even in this book and in th pages of the second volume of *Dead Soul* found after his death and pieced togeth by his friends (the author destroyed his ow final edition a few days before his death we cannot fail to note the writer's forme inexhaustible love for his country. Eve then, when he had taken the wrong road an was not able to find the true source of Ru sia's future prosperity, he was still full the passionate desire to see his country happ and powerful.

Gogol died on March 4th, 1852.

VLADIMIR ZHDANO

SAMUIL MARSHAK

In 1902, Vladimir Stassov, the celebrated Russian critic and art connoisseur, friend of Leo Tolstoy, and the inspirer of an entire pleiad of talented Russian artists and musicians, wrote to one of his friends:

"This summer my special Fortune and Luck has sent me a precious little gift! This is in the shape of a tiny, fourteen-year-old lad, scarcely three feet tall, but already surprising me and everybody who sees and hears him by his remarkable, early-developed talent. Although still a schoolboy, wearing his little uniform with silver braid round the neck and white, shining buttons down the front, he is already composing verse, indeed complete poems, has such a astonishing command of language, pain such amazing pictures of nature, and scen in which his characters speak and act wi such emotion that all who hear him wond and don't know whether to believe their ea or to consider it all a dream. . . ."

This "little boy" was Samuil Marshak f whom the meeting with Stassov proved still greater fortune and luck than for th famous "seeker after talent" himself.

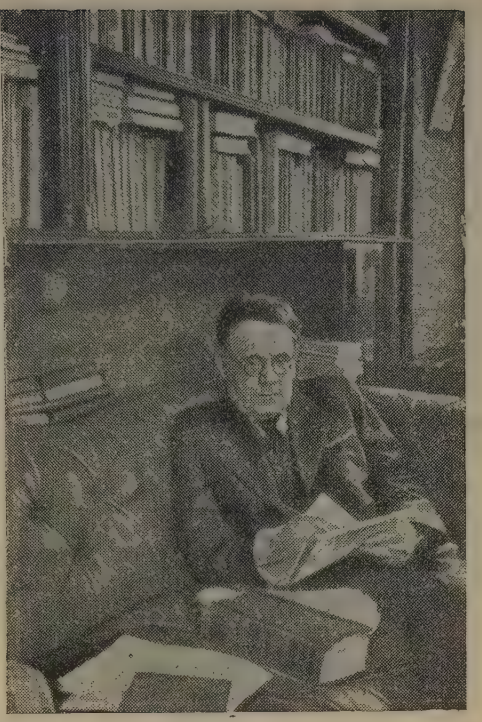
Marshak himself admits being a typic "prodigy" and his childhood was rich episodes that seem to have been borrowe from a touching Christmas tale.

The son of a restless inventor-chemist, nployed in a factory in the small provincial own of Ostrogozhsk not far from Voronezh, arshak took to writing poetry early, and y the time he reached his eleventh birthday id already translated the odes of Horace id was an avid reader of the ancient writers. ight from his earliest childhood he display- a profound and organic love of literature. iterature became an inseparable part of s life. He recalls how as a little boy, learn- g Krylov's fable of the *Cat and the Wolf* y heart, he was convinced that the wall hich surrounded the backyard was the iden- cal one on which the cat sat and talked with ie wolf.

On one occasion, at a children's party, here the boy recited his poems, he astonish- and won the admiration of a good-hearted octor who there and then declared himself ger to arrange the future of the young genius. ue to his word, the doctor introduced the y to the well-known art patron Baron Gins- rg, and shortly afterwards the little Marshak und himself in Petersburg, living in the xurious home of a wealthy man, attending aristocratic classical school together with e sons of Count Sheremetyev and Prince yazemsky, visiting exhibitions, theatres, ncerts, listening entranced to the music Chaikovsky, weeping over poems, and ex- riencing his childhood's first love for the ughter of his host, with whom he attended nglish lessons. And although this idyllic istence ended abruptly fortune continued to ile on her favourite.

Fate brought Marshak into contact with assov, a man with a great and noble Rus- an heart, who loved art passionately and sinterestedly and all his life eagerly sought nd carefully cultivated all that was talented, w and colourful in the Russia of those ays. At his first meeting with little Marshak, tassov took the boy to a bookshop and bought r him the most desired gift—a complete brary in de luxe edition of the Russian clas- cs.

Just as in a fairy tale, the boy passed from ne "fairy godmother" to another. In the mmer of 1902 Marshak made Gorky's ac- uaintance at Stassov's country-house near etersburg. Stassov regularly arranged musi- al evenings there and took an impish delight thinking out new entertainments. On one ccasion he got the young poet to compose an le in honour of the "four Russian bogatyrs" ho were to be his guests. The bogatyrs of ussian art were: the artist Repin, the compo- r Glazunov, the singer and actor Fyodor haliapin, and the writer Maxim Gorky. wo pianos opened the proceedings, and the oy recited something in pseudo-Russian yle. Alas! this "glory", written to order, iled to please the sarcastic "bogatyr" in ie high boots and Russian blouse who look- more like a burly navvy than a famous riter, and the boy felt more at ease with ie gay and elegant Chaliapin who captivated im immediately by his singing and his ac- r's charm. Later on in the evening, the host gain drew the attention of his renowned ests to the boy who this time recited verses his "real" poetry—something on a bibli-



cal theme and a translation of Mickiewicz. Gorky began to look at the boy attentively and on learning that he was in poor health, asked simply: "Would you like to live with me in Yalta?"

The matter was quickly arranged, and soon a telegram came from Yalta and the 15-year-old Marshak found himself on the Black Sea coast, living with Gorky's family, taking a cure, studying and reading to his heart's content; in the Crimea he began to take an interest in politics, made new acquaintances, and during the 1905 revolution he helped the revolutionary sailors, remained alone when Gorky's family left the Crimea, and, fearing arrest and expulsion from school, he fled from Yalta and returned to Petersburg—this time to his father and to the factory beyond the Nevsky Gates.

Childhood was ending and the good fortune which had hitherto attended him, deserted the "prodigy". Stassov died, Gorky was abroad. Hard times set in—a life of penury, running from one lesson to another, gatherings in the little cafe frequented by the literary youth, writing for the periodicals: *Zhurnal dlya Vsekh* (Every Man's Journal), *Satiricon*, almanac *Zhizn* (Life) and, finally, the more solid magazines *Russkaya Mysl* (Russian Thought) and *Severnye Zapiski* (Northern Annals).

Marshak might have remained a routine journalist had it not been for his inordinate desire to travel and see the world. Having saved 150 rubles, the young man set out for Odessa and there took ship for Syria and Palestine. Upon returning from this voyage, Marshak travelled to London, where he studied first in the Regent-Street Polytechnic and later at London University. During the

holidays he hiked through Devonshire and Cornwall, put to sea with the Cornish fishermen, lived in a Forest School in Wales. He paid careful ear to the dialect of the people, to the old English folk songs and, here, he began to translate English ballads. During his stay in the Forest School he made his first close contact with children and followed the work of the teachers with keen interest; here, the poet's daughter was born. He remained in England until the war of 1914, and in those days of misfortune, returned to his native land where he lived in extremely straitened circumstances, wandering through the south of Russia.

Marshak spent the first years of Soviet rule in Krasnodar, working on a newspaper, and here he first began to write for children; helped to organize the first children's homes in the Kuban and the first children's theatre. In 1921, having returned to Petrograd, he settled down to serious work on children's literature, edited and published the magazine *Novy Robinson* (New Robinson), searched for capable writers for children and himself eagerly wrote and translated books of verse for the youngsters: *The House That Jack Built*, *Kiddies in a Cage* (captions for drawings), *The Fire*, *The Post*, *the Story of the Stupid Mouse*, the humorous poems about *Luggage*, *The Absent-Minded Man*, *The Circus*, *Yesterday and Today* and so forth.

Marshak became the guiding spirit in organizing the new Soviet literature for children. His meeting with the artist V. Lebedev and their many years of collaboration resulted in a number of splendid books for juveniles.

Gorky, while abroad, learned of Marshak's work in literature and after many years they met again, at first on the island of Capri and later, after Gorky's return to the U.S.S.R., in Moscow.

Gorky, the tireless "talent spotter" recognized, with unfeigned joy, his disciple in Marshak: and the disciple who likewise was continually on the lookout for talented people in the domain of juvenile literature, spent his days and nights teaching and helping "veterans" to create a truly artistic book for children, as Gorky did in "adult" literature. While Gorky himself avoided writing for children, in the plea that he didn't know how to "talk to the little ones," he nevertheless took a lively interest in children's literature and highly valued Marshak's work in this field.

Marshak is now 60 years old. He ranks and justly so with the most eminent men in Soviet literature.

Marshak has followed four paths in literature: children's books, translations, dramaturgy, and satirical poetry. Let us travel with the poet along each of these paths.

II

In pre-revolutionary Russia, as everywhere in those days, children's literature was a monopoly of the pedagogues. The greater part of this pedagogical literature consisted of purely didactical reading having little in common with literary prose or true poetry. It should be said, of course, that many of Russia's great thinkers and masters of the pen occupied themselves with questions of education and children's literature. The philosophers and critics Belinsky, Chernyshevsky and Pisarev wrote about children's reading; Odoevsky and Aksakov wrote for children, as did Korolenko, Chekhov and Leo Tolstoy who published a pedagogical journal and left many stories for children that are unexcelled in their force, laconism, simplicity, clarity and depth of human morality. The majority of children's books, however, were of little artistic value and the best works for children were selected from adult literature and were not written specially for young readers.

Marshak, from the very beginning, solved for himself this hoary conflict between pedagogics and art: he writes exclusively for children, but his books are permeated with true poetry, with the result that they delight young and old, and are an integral part of the great stream of Soviet literature.

A feature of Marshak as a children's writer is that he has not conceived his pedagogical duty as a didactical one but as one of general education. He unfolds before his juvenile readers an entire realm of new words, things and conceptions.

Marshak's works are permeated by a humanistic attitude to the world, to all things living, but this is not imposed on his little readers as a moral to be drawn from a fable or as a tiresome chorus. If we take any of Marshak's writings for children—lyrical such as *Sleepiness and Yawning*, *The Round Year* or the *Story of a Stupid Mouse*, the humorous as *The Absent-Minded Man* or *Luggage*, satirical as *Mr. Twister*, his short poem *The Fire* and even his *Alphabet*—all are based on clever, good thoughts, on kind, but not sentimental, feelings. The world which Marshak unfolds to the children contains nothing terrible, cruel or senseless.

Lena, the tiny heroine of *The Fire* has disobeyed her mother not to touch the stove—and by her naughtiness has caused a fire. How many moral stories for children have been written on the same subject. But to Marshak the most important thing was not to punish the child for disobedience and not to frighten it. Lena is frightened as it is and sobs bitterly. But she sees—and Marshak has conveyed this beautifully to his little audience—how selflessly, with what skill and efficiency the men fight the fire, how dangerous a fireman's job is, how much strength, skill and discipline it demands. Lena cries bitterly because she is ashamed of herself in front of these big working men. Marshak knows children well and winds the story up cleverly and touchingly: instead of moralizing, the fireman Kuzma, having finished his hard work, presents the little girl with the cat which he has saved from the fire: "Here's a souvenir for you, take Pussy and dry her." And the little reader sighs with relief and emotion.

In the world which Marshak shows to the children, they—the little ones—are not lonely and helpless, because this is "our new world" which is being built up before their eyes. The principles of this world are free

n, justice, comradeship and work, and all se principles are illustrated in Marshak's etry. Labour is his starting point because e itself begins with labour. Marshak, like teacher Gorky, glorifies labour and the n who is craftsman at his job, Marshak ives to convey this pride to the child, nts him to understand how varied, inter- ing and important human labour really no work is easy and yet, at the same time, with what joy the *Living Letters* tackle eir work in his Alphabet. With remarkable se and exactitude he shows the children e paths which they can take in life. This done easily and simply, the democracy and uality of all professions are predetermined re by the system of the alphabet: all the tters are equal, and it goes without saying at "Dima, the children's doctor, working a hospital" stands side by side with "Eva, o rides a horse in the circus." The engin- r, Red Army man, Donbas miner, tractor- iver, artist, "Fedya, the physical culture structor, the star football player"—all e skilled craftsmen who have plenty to do, ch is necessary, and if it is so jolly to play these professions, how good it must be to ster them in reality!

Pride in and respect for labour breed re- ct for man, for the close-knit family of rkers, working comradeship becomes the is of friendship between people, only t labour is precious which is useful, just d necessary, as the work of Kuzma in *The re*, or the postman in *The Post*. A human ng is free to do as he pleases, but this edom must not bring injury to others. Marshak does not say all this in so many rds, but if we carefully analyze the ideo- ical content of his works, we find that it these thoughts and feelings which stand t. Behind the exterior carefree and easy itude, the brilliant play of words, the lful alliteration, and the delicate humour u will always find a firm basis for serious oughts and feelings. All this forms an or- nic part of Marshak's poetry, as it is a rt of the man himself—genuine admiration craftsmanship, cheerful diligence, love of e and good will. These are the qualities his individuality as an artist, and they manifested both in his poems and stories children, and in his wartime pamphlets d parodies. They also made themselves t in his choice of foreign poets' works for nslation into Russian.

One of Marshak's great merits is the high el to which he has raised poetical crafts- nship in children's literature. As "a lan- ge teacher", he seeks in the first place to ke the child understand and feel the mean- of the word, to enrich and enlarge its abulary, he introduces new words, reveals ir use and importance, and their differ- shades of meaning. As a teacher of try he makes the child feel the beauty of ying with words, the rhythm of various binations of words. Here he begins h popular poetry—folk tales, songs, rid- s, lullabies. However, the play of words is er the dominant factor in Marshak's ks, it is never used as an exercise in thm—it is always connected with the image which forms the subject of the given poem.

In even the shortest and most lyrical of his poems, Marshak observes the iron law of children's literature—that which determines whether or not the young reader will understand the work—the law of action. As the youngsters say of them, something "is always happening" in Marshak's stories.

The human, natural and actual desire for joy, which is particularly persistent in the child, is never forgotten by Marshak who knows the value of small joys and of great happiness. But he never kow-tows to that which is petty and low in human nature, nor does he just present the child with those "sweet" pleasures with which some children's authors sometimes think to entice the young readers. Marshak knows the secret of joy—"The kinder you are, the more joyful you'll be," the good grandfather says to the wicked one in his story. Joy is good, and those who want to be happy must strive for all things good, defend good and fight for it. To Marshak poetry itself is a good thing and therefore he teaches children to love and enjoy it.

III

Marshak, the translator, is older than Marshak, the author of children's books. While still in England, Marshak began to translate English folk ballads and songs. He occupies a leading place among Soviet poets-translators. The work of a translator is extremely instrumental for all Marshak's activities as a tireless propagandist of poetry. However, in his work as a translator Marshak is not only a "kulturträger": he is, first and foremost, a poet, free in his choice, partial in his tastes, true to himself.

The poet Zhukovsky, Pushkin's contemporary and the first great translator in Russian literature who gave the Russian reader unexcelled translations of Homer, Schiller and Goethe, once said that "a translator of prose is a slave, a translator of verse—a rival." Marshak competes with the originals of his translations and the unbiased reader cannot but acknowledge that his translations are worthy of ranking with the original works of great poets.

He always works as a co-author. Only after having himself experienced and understood the thoughts and feelings of the other poet, only after having chosen that which is near to him, Marshak begins to translate.

A translator is always an interpreter. Marshak not only translates the poems of the old English poets into Russian, but at the same time, he translates them from "the language of other days" into that of modern times. In Marshak's translations, Robert Burns, the poet of the 18th century, becomes near and understandable to us, as though he were our contemporary, he comes to us in the 20th century, bringing his poetical temperament, his character as a poet of the people, his philosophy of life and his wisdom, which so charmed Marshak.

The modern Russian reader is grateful te Marshak for having conveyed to him the

charm of the old English poets, for enabling him to enjoy the living, immortal poetry of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, free from that musty, cobwebby coating of the art relics taken from museums. Burns' cheerful *Honest Poverty*, the profound, almost mysterious tenderness of Wordsworth, the gentle sadness of Blake, the wisdom of Shakespeare's sonnets gladden us like flowers in spring, and we accept as a matter of course the fact that they have been preserved till our day. This in particular is true of a large cycle of Shakespeare's sonnets, translated by Marshak recently. Marshak has avoided the academism of the old translations and has conveyed the sonnets with surprising simplicity and clarity, with true Shakespearean depth of thought, elegance of verse and entrancing wealth of feeling.

And if the Shakespeare experts still rack their brains over many unsolved problems, Marshak has made us happier—we can simply read this lyrical diary, this history of the love of the great poet.

IV

Marshak the playwright lies somewhere between Marshak the author of children's books and Marshak the translator, and the playwright is derived from both of them.

Marshak's plays are written for the children's theatre to themes based first on Russian fairy tales *Teremok* (the Attic), *Gore-Zloschastye* (Sorrow and Misfortune), and then on the folklore of other Slav peoples *Twelve Months*. Marshak has taken these folk tales and as it were translated them into the language of the theatre, harmonizing them with the epoch. He has skilfully retold the popular fairy tale *Teremok*, giving it a political meaning. *Teremok* is the kingdom of all the peace-loving and diligent little beasts, and they live in friendship and happily. But the big beasts of prey from the neighbouring forests—the wolf and the fox—bear a grudge against the inhabitants of "Teremok"; they even force the good-natured bear to join them, hoping that he will go in front and pick the chestnuts out of the fire for them. But the citizens of "Teremok" are not caught napping, they defend themselves stubbornly; the beasts of prey, on the other hand, lack the bonds of friendship which unite the little animals; the wolf and the fox each thinks only of himself and the bear soon forsakes them. As a result "Teremok" remains impregnable and the enemy retires in confusion.

The dramatic fairy tale *Sorrow and Misfortune* shows the inconstancy of the fate of those who do not live by labour but trust to luck and good fortune: the lazy woodman, the merchant, the tsar—all fear "Sorrow-and-Misfortune", do not know what to do with him, try to get rid of him, and only the soldier to whom "Sorrow" comes in the end is not afraid of him; the life of the soldier is too hard for "Sorrow" and he runs away, leaving the soldier who can bear everything and whom "Sorrow" cannot break.

The play *Twelve Months*—which in 1944 won Marshak a Stalin Prize—is the traditional story of a poor orphan, ill-treated by a stepmother, and to whom all paths in life are opened by her warm, good heart, which helps her to overcome all difficulties. In the poetical fairy tale Marshak shows that nature reveals her miracles and treasures to those who are good and just and conceals them from the wicked. This magic play is charming in its theatrical ingeniosity, original interpretation of the old fairy tale motives, and, as in all Marshak's works, simple and expressive language.

V.

Marshak is most origina and each new book contains some poetical novelty.

Quite recently he wrote a short, lyrical cycle of verses for children, *The Book of Many Colours*. This booklet contains altogether six pages, each a different colour—green, blue, yellow, white, red, black. The green page is a meadow with grass and flowers, butterflies and grasshoppers, and on it are printed verses about all this. The blue page represents the sea and "at the bottom of the page" live dolphins and fish and marine plants and amidst them verses about the sea. The yellow page is a sandy desert with camels and a tortoise who "draws her head into her collar in fright." The white page is a field of snow and the words on it resemble the tracks left by animals, birds and men. The Red page is the Red Square in Moscow on a popular holiday. The black page—night with lights in the houses, at the street crossings and the bridge across the river with the light of the stars high in the black sky, and the ruby stars on the Kremlin towers.

With its poems written in different rhythms wonderfully vivid in the carefully chosen details, this remarkable little book seems very simple and pure, like the colours of its pages. At the same time it is permeated with a wistful lyricism, quite new in Marshak's poetry, and amazingly young.

During the War, while working for the *TASS Windows* and newspapers, Marshak manifested brilliant talent as a satirist and writer of epigrams. In his satirical-verse pamphlets the poet starts out as a rule with some well-known poem or popular phrase taken from an order-of-the-day, a newspaper report, our own communiqués or those of the enemy, and with needle-pointed witticism and biting satire he attacks and beats the enemy, frequently turning the latter's words taken from letters, statements and speeches against him. Such are the satirical ballads *About the Russian Town Velikie Luki and Lieutenant-Colonel von Sass, to whom Hitler had Promised to Re-name the Town in His Honour*; *War as Such*, and others.

Marshak's satirical war verses also reveal one of his chief qualities: masterly command of language. They are biting, possess sharp purity of rhythm, simplicity and clarity of thought, and are popular in the best sense of the word.

Marshak's manifold talent is at its zenith. With the years the poet's art grows but he himself does not age. Each new work of Marshak enriches Soviet literature.

VERA SMIRNOV

WARTIME UKRAINIAN LITERATURE

The Ukrainian writers, like those of the entire Soviet Union, played their part during the war years in the country's fight against the invader.

Not a few outstanding works have appeared in the Ukraine during these past years. They clearly bear the traits of the new socialist esthetics which determines the development of present-day Soviet literature.

Of particular interest are the writings of four Ukrainian poets—Pavlo Tychina, Maxim Rylsky, Mikola Bazhan and Leonid Pervomaisky. The recent verse of these four give forceful expression to the vital issues that stirred the minds of the Ukranian people in the war.

In the field of prose, besides some fine short stories and essays by Ivan Le, Yuri Yanovsky, Ivan Senchenko, Natan Rybak and Alexander Dovzhenko, there is a most interesting new novel by Yuri Smolich, *They Did Not Pass*. And this novel, together with the writings of the four above-mentioned poets, we shall single out for the reader as vivid specimens of recent Ukrainian literature.

I

Pavlo Tychina is without doubt the outstanding Ukrainian poet of the day. His lyrics reflect in their rich cadences the captivating lilt of the melodious Ukrainian language. Tychina's very first collection of poems, *Sunshine Clarinets*, revealed his fine gift for conveying his mood through the music of his lines. The role of innovator which Tychina has played in the poetry of the Ukraine may be compared to that of Mayakovsky in Russian poetry. A seeker by nature, Tychina has worked constantly on devising fresh means of expression, on evolving new word-formations and new methods of arrangement, ever striving to perfect line-forms. Each new book has been a milestone in his development.

Tychina's poetry has throughout been bound up with the history of Soviet Ukraine. In his books may be traced the road which that country has travelled from the 1917 Revolution to the present day. The poems of the 1944 collection which express the loftiest aspirations of man fully reveal the author's philosophical and esthetic creed.

His motto is contained in the book's title "Conquer and Live!" Those are the poet's two concepts: effort, striving, struggle, as the law of life, and humanitarianism, as the faith in the titanic, invincible force of man.

From these springs a complete poetic vision of the universe. For Tychina all things on earth are destined to inpsire man in his striving for a better future, for culture, for progress, for civilization. Nature is to "make the soul ring with the thunder of wrath," to "cleanse it in its storms," "exalt it with the radiance of lightning." The poet turns to Nature as his aid in the great work of purifying and reconstructing the world. Nature provides inspiration, fills him with courage and resolve.

One wartime Spring, so terrible for the Ukraine, found Tychina in Bashkiria—and there, far from the enemy-occupied homeland, depression assailed him. He reacted painfully, even morbidly to the awakening of Nature. His whole being "was taut as membrane." The grass and flowers in the meadows around called to memory the flower of his people—children whose life was crushed out by the Nazi jackboot; silver birches swaying in the wind reminded him of bodies swinging on the gallows; the tulip opening its red lips made him see the pain-contorted mouths of men and women buried alive. He was on the point of screaming with despair. But here Spring itself spoke to him:

> The swaying of the acacias makes you fearful.
> But you should take things simply, like the earth.
> On it the only things to conquer death
> Are those that breathe the force of life itself.

Life means development, growth. And whatever grows and develops is unconquerable. This idea serves to strengthen the poet's faith in victory for his country, in the triumph of progress over barbarism.

Man is the hub of the universe, its soul. The lyric hero of Tychina's lines is ever proud, pure and noble. The poet sees his hero at the critical moments of his life, in the hours when character is formed. He takes man in the vortex of world events and demands of him great deeds, fine concepts, grand movements of the soul, to "be worthy of your time," "fire your spirit," "let your soul be jetting, brimful, ever," "inflame your heart with the deeds of the age." In his poem *Be Upright Ever* Tychina calls upon his hero. At the same time he warns him "not all is pure that melts like snow"—be firm and staunch.

From his pages rises a galaxy of mighty fighters and victors in the war of good against evil, of progress against barbarism. The courageous figures of Lyuba Zemskaya, the girl-soldier, of Mokrina, the peasant mother and of her son, the guerrilla fighter, Zalizka, breathe infinite moral strength and beauty. Sons and daughters of the people, they embody the full force of its national character.

Finest among Tychina's latest poems is his *Burial of a Friend*, a brilliant specimen of the poet's art. The poem is constructed in the manner of a musical symphony. Its idea is unfolded in several distinct lines, which cross and interweave to part again like themes in music; the lyric narrative mounts and falls, mounts and falls again and culminates in a solemn, confident finale.

The theme in its general outline is as follows: the poet has a dream: while in a little town far East, a long way from the Ukraine, he learns of the death of a guerrilla friend, and decides to attend the burial of an unknown soldier. As he walks behind the bier, mentally he is following the remains of his distant friend. Suddenly he hears the sounds of a proud re-

quiem that eventually swells into an ode to life and victory.

Tychina's imagery is limpid and plastic. Because of this, the poem is convincing and impressive despite its rather involved structure. It is an embodiment of the people's grief for their fallen heroes—a grief that becomes an affirmation of the same joyous principle—to conquer and to live.

II

If Tychina's poetry rings with the music of the Ukrainian steppeland songs, Maxim Rylsky's lines are the Ukrainian landscape itself, embodied in human word. The principle of his poetry is "to feel all with a seeing hand," "to see all with a feeling eye." Rylsky began to write earlier than his other contemporary Ukrainian fellow-poets; the first collection of his poems, *The White Isles*, appeared in 1910 when the author was only fifteen. And in his latest volume, published in 1945, Rylsky is just as young as he was thirty-five years ago. In a recent poem he admits that he "would like to start afresh, and—I must confess—never end."

The tone of Rylsky's poetry is matter-of-fact, conversational; but in the more emotional passages it rises to oratorical heights. His lines are flexible, plastic. They form a canvas embroidered in vivid patterns of thought and feeling.

Rylsky's wartime collections—*The Burning Brush* and *The Great Hour*—are remarkable for their variety of form. Alongside the wrathful iambics of passionate denunciation, occur triumphant odes, and again, blank verse monologues after the manner of the Ukrainian duma.[1] Like Tychina, Rylsky is distinctly a Ukrainian poet. But that by no means operates as a restrictive factor. The principal poem in the *Great Hour* collection—the vision-poem *Thirst*—reveals, like Tychina's *Burial of a Friend* a leaning towards the monumental. This, too, is a symphony, as it were, composed of several successive pictures which are linked together by the unfolding of the inner theme, the thread of emotion. The poem opens with an Ode to the Homeland. Then follows sombre pictures of the past, culminating in an allegorical portrayal of the revolution. This stirring allegory is succeeded by a thoroughly realistic picture of the personal happiness of the poet and his family. But the idyll is shattered by the war. "Darkness now reigns there, my garden is trampled, my house is a prison," the poet exclaims in anguish. His voice grows wrathful once more, it rings with execration. He conjures up the image of the Motherland bidding her sons farewell as they go to war. The poem closes with a lyrical monologue: "Truth will prevail, I know, it is destined to endure through the ages," the poet says. "Victory will be ours, our Motherland will descend from the cross on which the barbarians have crucified her."

Rylsky's leaning towards the monumental is of long standing. His other narrative poems—*The Salt Traders*, *Hay*, *Love*, and *Excursion into Youth*—are well known as specimen of the modern epic genre. But in *Thir* as in none of the others, Rylsky achiev expression of the philosophic idea of unit between the personal and the social, one the key ideas of the new Soviet esthetic

III

The war found Tychina and Rylsky equi ped with the clearly formulated esthet principles which lay at the basis of the work all through the preceding years. Th case of Mikola Bazhan, a third major figure i modern Ukrainian poetry, is different. H war poems, collected in the *Stalingrad Not book*, marked a new phase in his writin

Like Rylsky, Bazhan started out as a r mantic. His poetry had always been of a emotional and philosophically abstract kin Historical and exotic motives sounded mo powerfully in his work.

The war brought him into direct conta with the people he wrote about. He saw the amid the daily routine of the front, observe their life and struggle, and what is more, hin self took part in it. This kinship of the po with the people, his personal share in th national effort of the Ukraine, made him fe the need for a new kind of imagery, the nee for realism in art.

In his early writings, describing anoth war, the Civil War of 1918-1921, Bazhan ha painted characters romantic and passionat his heroes had been men and women who gav to the cause of revolution "not fragmen of their hearts, but the full passion of li and death." The romance of the early Sovi years found inspired expression in Bazhan verse.

But the poet approached the recent war a riper, realistic mood. The heroes of th *Stalingrad Notebook* are flesh and blood cha acters in a setting mirrored with an exactne of documentary precision. Against the fea ful background of Stalingrad, "where deat stalks everywhere and where destructio roars," soldiers, officers, generals—all wh set in motion the vast and complex mechanis of modern warfare—act with a calm tha is at times almost epic.

Reared in the idea of construction, creative effort, of labour endeavour, the Sovi soldiers regarded their share in the wor catastrophe first and foremost as arduous to for the sake of life and happiness. For the the war became their work, their routine jo The characters of these men—normal a balanced—called for realistic rather tha romantic treatment.

IV

"The lyrical writings of Leonid Pervomaisk are lyrics of the mind. He penetrates in the stirrings of the human soul in order reveal them to the outside world, to dire the efforts of men along the way of lof creative endeavour, of genuine beauty, sincere and ardent attachments." That is description of Pervomaisky by Ivan Le, t Ukrainian novelist. And indeed, the poet world is that of the reactions, the passion the inner workings of the soul. For twel years he wrote of that world—the twel

[1] Duma—a Ukrainian popular folk epic, similar to a ballad.

years between his 1929 collection, *Crab Apples* and *Periwinkles Bright*, published in 1940. Eagerly and tenderly he observed the growth and development of the new socialist traits in Soviet men and women.

Then came the war. The avalanche of death, of misery, of destruction overwhelmed the builder of the new life. From constructive, creative labour he had to turn to destructive efforts.

Pervomaisky's wartime books *Earth* and *The Birthday*—which won him the Stalin Prize for 1944, are vivid proof of the precious fact that through all the calamities of the world war, the Soviet man preserved the feelings of humanity inculcated in the years of peace, the pure and lofty sentiments of friendship, love and justice, the worship of beauty and love of nature. Running like a crimson thread through every poem is the idea of the triumph of life over death.

. . . A Soviet airman is forced to bomb his own home, where a German headquarters staff is located. His machine noses ahead with its fearsome load. And on its wing "there trembles a blade of autumn grass, and bluster as it will, the wind is powerless to detach it."

In a battle-encompassed forest, a soldier lies on a bed of dark scorched pine needles. The deafening noise of the cannonade fills the air. Treetops twitching with pain, great pines lacerated at the root, fall heavily to the ground. Roaring of guns, blinding flashes, shell-bursts, concussion. And suddenly, amid the cacophony of destruction, the soldier hears a familiar, long-forgotten sound: a gnat is circling quite unabashed over his head. And its buzz sounds in the man's ears like a song of hope, of life. The smallest manifestation of life triumphs over all the horror of death.

So, through all the vicissitudes of war, the poet carries with him visions of life, of light, of joy—whether "a blade of autumn grass" or a "dauntless midget", a nightingale singing at the burial of a fellow-fighter or a snowdrop pushing up between a dead soldier's fingers.

No, though forced into war, the Soviet people lost nothing of their spiritual treasure-store. Nor did the poet himself lose his spiritual values. The war revealed to him "life simple as daily bread, as the coolness of spring water," but "the vision of the world of bygone years" he carried with him in his heart, fresh and fervent as ever.

Pervomaisky's pen gained remarkable force of composition in the war years, his craftsmanship grew more refined. He found new media, gained command of more intimate rhyming-systems, the quality of his composition became brilliant and distinctive.

V

In the Ukrainian prose of recent years, we must single out the new novel of Yuri Smolich, known hitherto as a writer of thrilling, at times well-nigh detective tales. The novel is called *They Did Not Pass*. Only the first part has appeared so far, but even so it is clear that it is a remarkable book.

It is largely the story of a man and woman brought together by chance at the beginning of the war and who then find themselves on different sides of the front. The young woman, Olga Basaman, a stenographer and student at a language school, remains in German-occupied Kharkov and there joins the guerrilla fighters. The man is an architect, an invalid, who goes with other refugees to Central Asia; in Part II he returns to the Ukraine as a guerrilla fighter.

The two meet accidentally in their home town on the night before the Red Army withdraws; and though their paths never crossed before, they soon find points of contact. One reason is that, faced though they are with fearful danger, each is aware of his public duty.

The story develops and amid the daily happenings of wartime, the author discloses the inner strength and beauty of the Soviet character.

The architect is among the last trainload of evacuees to pull out of the city. The refugees have left their all behind them in the Ukraine, many have lost relatives and friends. They are bitter, frightened, confused. After a few days, however, "these hundreds of different people, who had had nothing in common before, formed into organized groups; a definite routine grew up in each carriage and monitors were elected, the medical people donned their white smocks and performed their duties here, aboard the train." The collective spirit, the sense of organization, discipline and civic duty manifested themselves even among this crowd of refugees lost in the remote steppes.

In still more difficult circumstances, the same qualities are displayed by three Soviet girls who remain in German-occupied Kharkov.

Upon entering the city, the Germans order all Jews into the ghetto where death awaits them; the three Ukrainian girls —Maria Chernova, Nina Kirichenko and Olga Basaman—but slightly acquainted before—save a fellow-student at the risk of their own lives by signing a statement to the effect that she is not Jewish.

When Olga finally decides that she must become an active fighter, her first impulse is to kill the only German officer she knows. But when she reaches his quarters, she changes her mind. Such an act of vengeance is too small and inadequate. One German officer is too little, too insignificant. Her life, the life of a Soviet citizen, a builder of the future, is too great a price for the death of this nonentity. "She would not pay with her life for Vogelsanger alone. . . Let Vogelsanger be the tenth, the twentieth, the hundred and twentieth." But then she must not act alone. She must join in the common struggle, must find the underground resistance organization—and find it she does.

In the meantime, the first brick wall has been laid on the site of the evacuated factory in the Hungry Steppe. For the people on the construction site it is a happy day. But for the architect the event is unspeakably bitter. For walls might be called the symbol of his whole life's endeavour. Millions of square metres of walls were built to his designs during the past twenty years. And for him

this little four-metre wall is a reminder that there, in the Ukraine, his life's work is lying shattered in ruins.

"I have an organic aversion to destruction of any kind. . . .

"But here before me is the first wall in the Hungry Steppe, erected by such heroic effort—a mighty symbol of my people's tenacity and yet I feel that I cannot erect walls, cannot build, I must help settle the score, must be revenged for the destruction of life; the longing is blighting my whole being."

So, bent on having a direct share in the fight, the architect disregards his sickness and the hardships ahead, and goes to German-occupied territory as a guerrilla fighter.

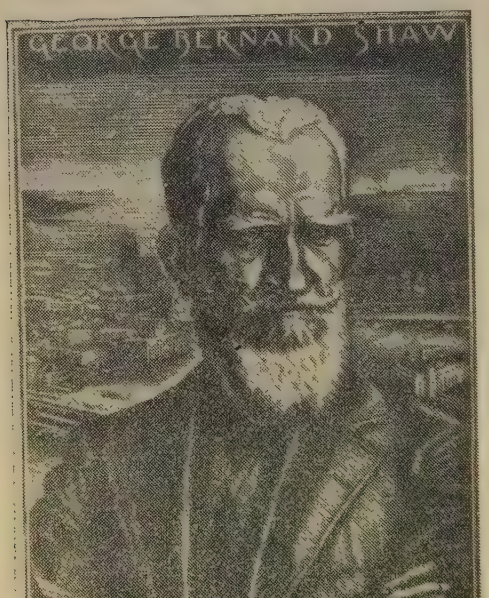
In the ordeal of war, Smolich unfolds the traits of socialist man. Only part of the novel has appeared so far, but even that part reveals the profundity of the author's treatment, the subtlety of his character portrayal and his gift for conveying vivid images with the utmost economy of expression.

Each of these new Ukrainian books is stamped indelibly with its author's personality. The epic monumentality of Rylsky and Tychina, the passion of Bazhan and the lyrical fervour of Pervomaisky, the psychological subtlety of the prose of Smolich testify to the manifold variety of present-day Ukrainian literature. These books are but samples of recent Ukrainian poetry and prose. But they are characteristic of the literature of a people to whose lot fell the grimmest trials of the war, a people which succeeded in preserving in adversity the finest qualities of its national character—courage, devotion and love of nature and beauty.

VLADIMIR ROSSELS

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

(On the occasion of the 300th anniversary of his birth)



George Bernard Shaw. Portrait by M. Pikov

Two hundred and thirty-three years ago, when Bernard Shaw was still a young man, one English critic wound up a book about him with the words: "Perhaps he may be, let us hope that he may be, the first of historical men to rival Methuselah." [1] As the reader is aware, this prophecy was fulfilled and today the renowned writer is celebrating his 300th birthday.

[1] Edward Shanks. *Bernard Shaw.* 1923, p. 116.

We are happy to inform readers that Bernard Shaw is as perky as a lad of ninety, and never misses his regular morning run on his atomic bicycle. His creative energy is as inexhaustible as ever. He is working at present on the preface to his latest play which he assures us will be the briefest of all the forewords he has written in the past one hundred and fifty years—running to no more than three volumes of five hundred pages each.

G.B.S. lives as before on the Earth. As the reader knows, however, Shaw does not write about the Earth only. During the past century he has written numerous plays satirizing life on the other planets. In all his writings, however, Shaw remains the typical earth-dweller, which, incidentally, does not detract from his popularity throughout the universe. His plays are staged not only in the theatres of the solar system but far beyond it as well. We have been informed, for instance, that the Television Theatre on Sirius is to present a premiere of *The Four Apostles*, a free adaptation of the New Testament in the usual Shavian manner. The play consists of 247 scenes and the performance is calculated to last no more than four months.

Readers of Shaw's *St. Joan* will, I fear, be disappointed at finding a reiteration of the old Shavian ideas in *The Four Apostles*. The play begins with a description of the Christ who is portrayed as an extremely intelligent and energetic young man. His wisdom and his satiric comments about the rulers of Judea (depicted as the typical colonial officials) make him so popular that, as Shaw tells us "it is hardly surprising that he was judicially crucified by the Roman colonizers of Judea, whom he bothered with his criticisms and untimely questions as to 'What Is Truth?'" "Like my Joan he was an upstart in public favour, and there were only two opinions about him. One w

that he was miraculous, the other, that he was unbearable."

But the story of Christ is merely the prologue to the play. "As for the prologue, I could hardly be expected to stultify myself by implying that Christ's history in the world ended unhappily with his crucifixion, instead of beginning there," the author writes in his preface, repeating his old preface to *St. Joan* now forgotten by the present generation.

But if Mr. Shaw does repeat himself somewhat, the subsequent interpretation of *The Four Apostles* constitutes an extremely interesting story showing how Christ, the realist, was romanticised by his disciples.

I shall refrain from a detailed analysis of his play until it is published. In the meantime allow me to proceed to a review of the writings already known to the reader. In doing so I am quite well aware of the risks I am taking. I know perfectly well that Shaw was as little use for us critics as Einstein said for anyone who was not mathematically-minded.

The task of a critic is to explain the meaning of a particular work and to give it his appraisal. But here is where the difficulty comes in. For Shaw's critics are still unable to agree on the merits of his work. As was the case in the olden days, some of them do not understand him yet agree with him, while others understand him and for that very reason disagree with him. For some he is a clown, for others a prophet.

Shaw expressed his ideas so frankly at times that some of his compatriots were inclined incapable of comprehending him. One of Shaw's invariable opponents, a writer who claimed that he understood Shaw but did not agree with him, put it rather well when he said: "I hear many people complain that Bernard Shaw deliberately mystifies them. I cannot imagine what they mean; it seems to me that he deliberately insults them. His language, especially on moral questions, is generally as straight and solid as that of a bargee and far less ornate and symbolic than that of a hansom-cabman. The prosperous English Philistine complains that Mr. Shaw is making a fool of him. Whereas Mr. Shaw is not in the least making a fool of him; Mr. Shaw is, with laborious lucidity, calling him a fool. G.B.S. calls a landlord a thief, and the landlord, instead of denying or resenting it, says: 'Ah, that fellow hides his meaning so cleverly that one can never make out what he means, it is all so fine a pun and fantastical.' G.B.S. calls a statesman a liar to his face, and the statesman cries in a kind of ecstasy: 'Ah, what quaint, intricate and half-tangled trains of thought! Ah, what elusive and many-coloured mysteries of half-meaning!' I think it is always quite plain what Mr. Shaw means, even when he is joking, and it generally means that the people he is talking to ought to howl aloud for their sins. But the average representative of them undoubtedly treats the Shavian meaning as tricky and complex, when it is really direct and offensive. He always accuses Shaw of pulling his leg at the exact moment when Shaw is pulling his nose." [1]

As for myself I have not yet decided which position to adopt. Sometimes it seems to me that I understand him and that I agree with him, but quite often I fail to understand him and do not agree with him. But perhaps that is not really important after all. To understand and not to agree is the privilege of our profession, a privilege, however, of which I would rather not make use at the moment, and for the following reason:

When the first Socialist state in the world came into existence in my country, Shaw became its friend. The people of my country appreciated Shaw's honesty. They regarded him as their friend, had highest respect for his merits and considered his shortcomings far less important. The writer's own attitude toward the people of this country and toward the country as a whole was somewhat the same.

2

G.B.S. is a contemporary of several epochs. Many changes have taken place in the world during his lifetime. Social forms, morals and customs have changed, technique has advanced, but Shaw has remained true to himself. He stands like a rock of ages, impervious to the waves that dash themselves against it and the gales that rage around its summit.

He was once called the 20th century Voltaire. But he has remained the Voltaire of the 21st and 22nd centuries. It is a great pity that no Houdon has yet been found to imprint his satirical smile in marble. It must be admitted that modern man, although he has conquered the celestial spaces, gives sufficient reason for this smile, on less than his remote ancestors who moved about the world at the snail's pace of 500-600 kilometres an hour.

Before writing this article I wished to acquaint myself with the epoch in which Shaw was born and in which he spent his childhood. But my Time Machine is an obsolete model (Wells—1895) and hence cannot be set for any particular year. Moving the lever over to the second half of the 19th century I found myself diving into an interminable whirl of wars, uprisings and revolutions. In an effort to come out of a dizzy tailspin, I switched the lever to the first half of the 20th century only to find myself in an even more dangerous position. In fact, I was very nearly hit by a shell of sorts, which from subsequent research into ancient history I learned had at one time been called rocket bombs in England.

When I recovered from the shock I realized that these dangerous experiments would help me to understand such of Shaw's writings as *Arms and the Man, Caesar and Cleopatra,* and especially his so-called "war" or rather "anti-war" plays which are so incomprehensible to our modern reading public. Although the ancients made every effort

[1] G. K. Chesterton. *George Bernard Shaw.* 1914, p.p. 91-92.

to explain in their works the meaning of the word "war" it nevertheless remains much of a mystery to us today.

I must remind readers that in the first century of Shaw's life the technique of destruction was very highly developed. Science in this barbarous epoch was more often than not not devoted to the cause of progress, instead, it served those who used the fruits of the human mind to sow death and destruction.

Let us recall that in the years of Shaw's youth the social system in most of the countries on Earth was a capitalist system in which social inequality prevailed. Inequality is another term that is incomprehensible to the modern reader. He knows the meaning of inequality of years, inequality in the diverse masses of matter, but try to explain to him the meaning of inequality among people! I shall not attempt to do so; instead let me refer the reader to such of Shaw's early writings as *Widowers' Houses, Mrs. Warren's Profession, Major Barbara* and others. In his youth Shaw expended a considerable amount of effort in trying to make his contemporaries see the stupidity of the social conditions prevailing at the time.

Most people nowadays incline to the belief that in his earlier works Shaw was simply giving rein to his imagination. But people who lived in the same era have declared, on the contrary, that he was a realist. "Shaw claims to be one of those realists who have the courage to face the truth. Other realists are painters of phenomena, while Shaw is a seeker of the reality behind phenomena. As his friend the oculist reminded him, his vision is normal, not in the sense that he sees things as other people do; he sees them *better*."[1]

3

Here is a piece of interesting information from *Back to Methuselah*, Part IV, Act I: "About a thousand years ago there were two authors named Kipling. One was an eastern and a writer of merit, the other being a western, was of course only an amusing barbarian."

To this it may be added that two writers named Shaw also lived in that epoch. Both were motivated by the same desire of "a few perfectly practical reforms which shall enable a decent and reasonable man to live a decent and reasonable life" without having to submit to the great injustices and the petty annoyances which meet you now at every turn."[2]

But these two Shaws disagreed on the question of the methods by which a "decent and reasonable life" might be achieved. One of them in his writings demonstrated quite clearly that in order to make life worthy of man it was necessary to change the social milieu. This Shaw wrote some rather "unpleasant" plays. The other believed that in order that life might be decent it was necessary to change man himself. This Sh preferred to write metabiological pla

The "unpleasant" Shaw was a realist a a socialist. The "metabiological" Shaw w an idealist. The unpleasant Shaw was iconoclast, the metabiologist was "a beli er in the Life Force".

The "unpleasant" Shaw criticized t 20th-century life as would a man of the 22 century; the "metabiologist" predicted the ture without, however, venturing beyond t narrow mental horizons of the 20th-centu man. As a matter of fact, in envisioni the man of the future, the metabiologist c not go further than Jonathan Swift's Gulliv who believed that the men of the future, ha ing conquered death, would become revo ing Struldbrugs who would lose all ta for life. But what may be forgiven an ign ant ship's surgeon is inexcusable in a me biologist.

Evidently the metabiologist, in spite all his claims to science, was merely a pu tan after all. He conceived of the evoluti of mankind as the emancipation of man fr the "evils of the flesh".

History proved that the "unpleasant" Sha had been right. But the metabiologist conti ues passionately to uphold his theory in whole series of dramas furnished wi voluminous forewords.

The metabiologist has turned out to be pessimist into the bargain. What he paint as a picture of the future was actually gigantic panorama of depression. His prop ecies did not materialize. And the be refutation of his theories is the esteem Shaw himself. He is now three hundred yea old, yet he in no way resembles those wretc ed degenerates he depicted in the pers of the "ancients" in *Back to Methuselah* On the contrary, Shaw's laughter loses grimness and gains in merriment as the ce turies roll by. Was it not he who, in a let to Leo Tolstoy who had reproached him his excessive fondness for joking, wro "Why should humour and laughter be exco municated? Suppose the world were only o of God's jokes, would you work any the less make it a good joke instead of a bad one?

This is Shaw as we have always kno him—a man who has sought to change t world from a bad joke into a good one.

4

Whereas most writers aspire to beco classics from their first book, Shaw who h written shoals of books, does not want be a classic. His every new utterance is challenge to all and everything. Every bo he writes is on some burning topic.

It is time, high time to tell him that is a classic; that we forgive him his attac on Pavlov, as we forgave Shakespeare believing in the Ptolemaic system beca he did not know of Copernicus. The sun has its spots but it shines no less brigh for all that. The astronomers study t spots and we bask in the sun's light a warmth.

Shaw's mind is a beacon that takes part

[1] S. C. Sen Gupta. *The Art of Bernard Shaw*, Oxford University Press, 1936. p.p.6-7.

[2] Archibald Henderson. *George Bernard Shaw*. 1911. p. 149.

[1] Letter to Leo Tolstoy, February 14, 19

ular pleasure in lighting up the dark corners of life. And that is well. The world has always needed men who are not afraid to speak the truth. And if Shaw does err at times there is no great harm in that. Those are the errors of an honest mind. His life's purpose has always been to benefit mankind although he loves his fellowmen without sentimentality and loathes anything resembling charity.

Yes, far from growing old with the years, G. B.S. is clearly growing younger. Not long ago he declared that he is ready to live another three hundred years. We heartily welcome the thought, and on his 300th birthday we greet the Methuselah of world literature, at once the oldest and the youngest of all modern writers—George Bernard Shaw!

EVGENI ALMAZOV

BURNS IN RUSSIA

One hundred and fifty years have passed since the death of Scotland's greatest poet Robert Burns. In Russia, during the past century Burns has enjoyed immense popularity. His works aroused particularly profound interest among the representatives of Russian revolutionary democracy who found the thoughts and sentiments expressed in his poems very much akin to their own. In 1861, Nikolai Ogarev, writer and revolutionary democrat, who was a close friend of Herzen's and shared the latter's exile in England, stated in an article that Burns was a truly popular poet "who lived and sang among the tillers of the soil."

Translations of Burns' poems began to appear in Russian magazines towards the middle of the last century. It is interesting to note that the first translators were poets of the revolutionary democracy. One of these, Mikhail Mikhailov was exiled by the tsarist government and died in penal servitude. To him belong the first Russian translations of *John Anderson, My Jo, John Barleycorn, To a Mouse, To a Mountain Daisy*, and several other well-known poems by Burns. Vassili Kurochkin, the Russian "Beranger" as he was called by his contemporaries, also translated Burns' poetry. Pyotr Weinberg introduced the Russian reader to *The Jolly Beggars*, Vladimir Kostomarov to *Tam O'Shanter*, and *The Cotter's Saturday Night*.

In 1875 the poet Nikolai Gerbel issued an anthology of English verse which contained translations of some of Burns' poetry and a biography of the poet. "The chief merit of Burns' works," wrote Gerbel, "lies in their absolute sincerity. Particularly charming are his songs, they need not be set to music for they, themselves, are music."

The first Russian edition of Burns' selected poems appeared in 1897. A second edition, published in 1904, was compiled by the peasant poet, Ivan Beloussov.

Russian critics devoted considerable attention to Burns. He is mentioned by the famous Shakespearean expert Nikolai Storozhenko in his sketch *Poets of Need and Sorrow*, in which he compares the Scottish poet with Crabbe and Thomas Hood. A translation of Carlyle's famous essay on Burns was published in 1878. An article on Burns by the critic Ivan Ivanov was printed in the magazine *Russkaya Mysl* (Russian Thought) in 1897. Pyotr Weinberg, the translator of *Jolly Beggars*, published a detailed magazine article on Burns which was later included in his volume of selected articles entitled *Pages From the History of Western Literature.* (1907).

After the October Revolution Burns' popularity in Russia increased thanks to the appearance of new translations, distinguished for their remarkable poetical artistry. In closeness to the original, the new translations are superior to those of the past century. The talented Edward Bagritsky, who was the first of the Soviet poets to undertake the translation of Burns, gave us excellent renderings of *John Barleycorn* (1923) and *The Jolly Beggars* (1928).

Considerable Burns research has been undertaken by the poetess Tatyana Shchepkina-Kupernik who in 1936 published her *Selected Lyrics by Robert Burns* containing translations of 75 songs and poems. This edition, published in 10,000 copies, contained a biography of the Scotch poet and a commentary on his verse.

Shortly before the war, the well-known poet and translator Samuil Marshak turned his attention to Burns, and in May 1939, the journal *Molodaya Gvardia* (Young Guard) published a number of his translations. During the war Marshak's book *English Songs and Ballads* in which Burns' translations occupy considerable space, was printed in three editions. Marshak has published translations of 19 poems, including *Farewell to the Highlands, Honest Poverty, Robin* and *M'Pherson's Farewell*. Marshak has succeeded brilliantly in conveying the melody of Burns' verse.

Amongst Soviet critics of Burns are S. Babukh, M. Gutner and the author of this article. Gutner, who has written a chapter on Burns for the *History of English Literature* published by the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., notes Burns' adherence to the traditions of Scotch popular poetry, and considers that the Scotch poet was the spokesman of the revolutionary-democratic circles in English and Scotch society at the end of the 18th century. The article mentions the Rousseau influence in Burns' verse and compares the latters' optimism with the pessimism of Crabbe. He lays particular stress on the lyric nature of Burns' poetical works.

ALEXANDER ANIKST

Story About High Courage in Adversity

Boris Leonidov. *Ward 3*, a story. *Soviet Writer* Publishing House. Moscow. 183 pages.

Boris Leonidov's *Ward 3* is the story of people who have suffered the most cruel injury of all that war can bring: loss of sight. Ward 3 of an army hospital has six Red Army officers and men suffering from eye wounds. Some of them have only partially lost their sight, others—Lieutenant Timchenko and driver Titov—have been plunged into gloom forever. The same fate hangs over Captain Pitomtsev; true he has a faint hope of restoring one eye. All three, each in his own way, strive "to keep their end up", to keep their place in life. It's not a matter of "bread and butter," says Captain Pitomtsev, "we'll be given that."

It's a matter not a whit less important—of their place in the scheme of things. Captain Pitomtsev has a strong character, is active and energetic. Brimming over with love of life, he refuses to be bowed by his misfortune, refuses to jettison his hopes—"I've got hopes in plenty," he says, and "I'm not picking the 'dreams that float in the clouds', but the close warm hopes of earth." That does not mean that Captain Pitomtsev does not have his fits of depression, that he does not fear what his affliction might bring. But he battles against faltering spirits, his own and his comrades' too, and what seems to be an insuperable obstacle is conquered by a man of indomitable courage.

Before the war the captain had worked as an engineer in a big factory. He writes to the factory from the hospital with suggestions of how to improve work and his suggestions are put into effect. He thinks that blind as he is, he can be of some use at the factory. Finally he finds in himself the power to love and be happy. As one of his ward mates said of him "You need a lot more strength to feel happy than unhappy." At the end of the story we learn that Pitomtsev recovers his sight. But even if that had not happened the reader knows that Captain Pitomtsev would have been among life's victors just the same.

Comradeship, a quality common to all the inmates of Ward 3, is particularly strong with Pitomtsev. His friendship proves a tower of strength for 20-year-old Lieutenant Timchenko who is blind with no hope of recovery. The captain helps Timchenko regain self-confidence, to believe that as before he has big things to do in life. Timchenko has a gift for music. Gradually, under the captain's persuasion, he abandons the thought that his song is sung and believes that he can do well in music despite his infirmity.

Titov, the lorry-driver, is also blind in both eyes. A man of deeds rather than words he begins while yet in the ward to get ready for what awaits him outside the hospital. With dogged perseverance he learns to assemble a telephone. His worry is not what he is going to do but what sort of reception his wife will give him now he is blind. His wi has not written to him since the news of h blindness and Titov is torn by doubts. A the ward feel for him. Theirs is not an o pressive, humiliating sympathy but a r strained and tactful concern. In the end Tit takes the manly way, abandons all thoug of appealing to his wife's sense of pi and declares himself the equal of any ma as husband, father and bread-winner.

Each of these men in his own way displa the same quality, the "never say die" spir that brought them through the trials of t front and that keeps them in the ranks useful citizens even after injury.

Popular Series About Great Russian Actor

The *Art* Publishing House is still printi the *Popular Library* series about great Ru sian actors, composers, musicians and artis

A number of editions have just appear dealing with these personalities.

Ivan Afanasyevich Dmitrevsky, by V. Vs volozhsky-Gengross is a booklet about th actor of the 18th century who with Fyod Volkov, another actor, laid the foundatio of the Russian national theatre.

Dmitrevsky won recognition from h contemporaries not only for his talent the stage but also for his educational wo in the sphere of theatre which entitles hi to a place among such outstanding innovato in Russian theatrical life like Mikhail Shche kin and Constantine Stanislavsky. Dmitre sky was at once an actor, a leader of the you Russian theatre, a man who trained ma good actors and a historian of the theatre, playwright and a translator.

The Russian theatre has to thank Dmitre sky for many additions to its repertoire, its bonds with the theatres of the West, pecially with the French. Dmitrevsky w the first to stage Beaumarchais' *Eugenie* Russia. He played the leading part. It was too that acquainted the Russian playg with Molière.

G. Krizhitsky tells in interesting fash the story of Constantine Varlamov (18 1915), the famous comedian. "The K of Russian Comedians", "Uncle Kosty the fat man the public adored was an ac born. With no regular stage schooling was yet an artist of rare charm and intuiti Krizhitsky upsets the verdict of the old c ics that Varlamov, an actor who found feet on the boards of Alexandrinsky Thea in Petersburg, was the essence of natio humour, and nothing else. Varlamov gave performances full of fine perception plays by Shakespeare, Lope de Vega Molière.

In two monographs about modern art Varvara Ryzhova (S. Durylin) and Ale der Ostuzhev (V. Philippov), both Peop Artists of the U.S.S.R., the authors out their progress in the Maly Theatre.

S. Durylin characterizes Ryzhova as a t ist, a brilliant colourful artist. He dv on her "theatrical family tree", comin

he does of an old family of actors linked with he Maly Theatre. Her parents had the good ortune to perform in A. Ostrovsky's plays nder the author's personal supervision. In er turn Varvara Ryzhova had the luck to erform in Leo Tolstoy's plays and hear the uthor's opinions at first hand. S.Durylin gives etailed analysis of the numerous and var- ed parts played by Ryzhova.

V. Philippov throws light on Ostuzhev's rogress as an artist from his parts as the lover hero" in Western-European plays, rom Romeo, through Chatsky in Griboyedov's *Vit Works Woe* to *Othello*, the culminating em of his career.

A number of new booklets in the series oncern people of the Art Theatre: one of ts founders Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko nd Olga Knipper-Chekhova, the actress. hen, too, there is a booklet about Boris hchukin, a fine actor of the Vakhtangov heatre.

Another of the series is *The Durov Brothers*, y Y. Dmitriev. It tells the life story of two famous clowns of the Russian circus, Vladi- ir and Anatoly Durov. They are particu- arly memorable because they were the first o introduce biting political satire into the awdust ring. Anatoly died before the Octo- er Revolution. Vladimir Durov lived until 34 and was the first of circus artists to arn the title "Merited Artist of R.S.F.S.R". Vladimir Durov was notable not so much as a clown as an animal trainer. He made use f the discoveries of Ivan Pavlov, the great hysiologist. Vladimir and Anatoly Durov ounded something in the nature of a school f clowns and aminal trainers. Among their uccessors are their daughter, sons and grand- hildren.

A Turkmenian Novel of the 18th Century

Nabenzhe. *Sayat and Khemra. The State Turkmentan Publishing House. Ashkhabad.* 180 pages.

Nabenzhe is one of the biggest figures of Turkmenian 18th-century literature. He has become known outside Turkmenia only in the past five years. The medium has been the publication of his works by the Institute of Language and Literature attached to the Turkmenian branch of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences. The details of the writer's life have been lost, but his works give us pictures of the wonderful scenery, the colourful life and customs of Turkmenia, they reproduce treasures of folklore, the epics, tales and legends of the Turkmenian people.

Nabenzhe's most popular work *Sayat and Khemra* is sung by bards all over Turkmenia, in many parts of the Caucasus and among the Turkmenians of Stavropol Region. In form the work closely approaches the epic.

At the wedding of Khemra, a young man, and Selby, a lovely girl, one of the minstrels present tells the guests about the wonderful charms of the beautiful Sayat. Khemra filled with passion for the fair maiden described by the minstrel, leaves the wedding feast, abandons his young wife, saddles his horse and goes off to seek Sayat. The nove is built around Khemra's adventures as he tries to carry off Sayat. The girl is fearless, resourceful, capable of wielding the sword herself in defense of her own person and friends and emerges triumphant from all trials. She boldly breaks with tribal custom, refuses the husband chosen for her in childhood and elopes with Khemra.

Khemra is irresolute, heedless and susceptible. His feelings are forever wavering between Sayat and Selby, the wife chosen for him by his parents. In moments of danger he is ready to desert Sayat and return to Selby, the usual type of Turkmenian woman of the old days, one who uncomplainingly accepted her lot and bowed to the will of her husband, "the second Allah for the wife".

In the narration prose is combined with verse. The author writes the story of the events in prose but as soon as he has to portray feelings the prose changes for poetry.

A Book About Admiral Senyavin

Lev Rubinstein. *Admiral Senyavin*, a novel. *Navy Publishing House.* Moscow.

Admiral Dmitry Nikolaevich Senyavin (1763—1831) is one of the most interesting figures among Russia's great sailors. Senyavin was a great naval strategist, one of the founders of the new school of Russian naval tactics. With Ushakov he carried on Peter the Great's seafaring traditions. Under him the Russian Navy became a potent factor in the tangled skein of politics waged by the game of European powers of his day.

Lev Rubinstein deals with the most striking period of Senyavin's life—with the Mediterranean campaign of 1806—1807, ending in the destruction of the Turkish fleet in the famous battle of Aphon on July 1st., 1807.

The book brings to us a regular portrait gallery of Russian seamen at the beginning of the 19th century. All of them, officers and ratings alike, are men of Senyavin's school, enterprising, staunch and brave. Among the personages mentioned in the book are Napoleon and Sultan Selim the 3rd of Turkey.

The author transfers the scene from the Dalmatian Coast to the Tuileries Palace where Napoleon gives instructions to General Sebastiani, his envoy about to depart for Turkey; and again from Constantinople to Lisbon and to Petersburg.

Battle scenes alternate with Sebastiani's negotiations with the Turkish ministers; from a cafe in Ragusa, the reader is whisked to a Russian ship of the line during an engagement. The author deals competently with the historical material.

Readers abroad know of Lev Rubinstein from his book *The Path of the Samurai* which has been translated into 14 languages. Following that work Lev Rubinstein published *The Collapse of the South* about the American Civil War. His latest book is a substantial addition to the storied chronicles of the Russian navy.

Tales About Things

Mikhail Ilyin. *Tales About Things.* Illustrations by N. Lapshin. *Children's Publishing House.* Moscow. 397 pages.

M. Ilyin's new book unfolds to children a world full of wonders. This magic world is not the fabric of fairy tale, is not somewhere "beyond the hills", but right here in our own world, in our own room.

Five thousand WHERES, seven thousand HOWS,

One Hundred Thousand WHYS.

That is the epigram from Rudyard Kipling chosen to preface the book. It appears that we may encounter wonders and mysteries at every step. And travelling around the room the author reveals its secrets. The first halt is at the tap. The juvenile reader learns why water washes away dirt, when people began to wash themselves, why formerly people hung curtains around their beds, what lather is, why we drink water and so on and so forth. Having said all there is to be said about water the author moves on. The second halt is the stove. Fire, fuel and steam are the absorbing subjects the writer enlarges upon here.

When the readers reach the stop called "The Table" they learn why milk goes sour, why some sorts of cheese are honeycombed, what potatoes are, when the first fork was used, etc. Then comes dissertations on lamps, gas, clocks, the origin of writing, automobiles . . . in fact there appears to be nothing which Ilyin in his attractive book does not explain how it originated, its structure, properties and purpose. The book is divided into brief chapters with fascinating headings. A good easy style, lively attractive form, and simple lucid explanations about the most complex phenomena makes *Tales About Things* a valuable and instructive book for children . . . and, perhaps, not only for children!

The Famous Playwright on the Theatre

Alexander Ostrovsky on the Theatre. Notes, speeches and letters. Editor Grigori Vladykin and preface by him. *Art* Publishing House. Leningrad. 214 pages.

This collection contains the great Russian playwright's speeches, notes and letters either hitherto unpublished or scattered in newspapers, magazines and other publications. They reveal Ostrovsky as theoretician and historian of the theatre. What Ostrovsky has to say about theatrical art, of the educative influence of the playwright and the theatre, on types of actors, on the destiny of the Russian theatre is extremely important and revealing in many aspects.

Ostrovsky strove for a national theatre, for a Russian school of playwrights and actors. He defended "the triumph of truth" in the theatre, "living types taken wholly from life and purely Russian situations". Ostrovsky contended that the new democratic public needed "the so-called domestic life repertoire" which "if it were artistic, that is if it were true to life would show what is fine and good in the Russian, what qualities he must treasure and cultivate and what in him was wild and uncouth, what he must combat." "The Russian's freshness of feeling and his serious turn of mind were the warrant that genuine healthy art, realistic and democratic, would become part and parcel of the Russian theatre for always. The dramatist's comments on the performances of actors of his day in Moscow and Petersburg are invaluable material for the historian of the Russian theatre. Ostrovsky's thoughts on the theatrical school, the importance of professional training, and on the general cultural level of the actor show how keenly the playwright loved the theatre and what an exceptional knowledge he had of the laws of theatrical art.

A New Edition of Latin Poem

Lucretius. *De rerum natura.* Editing and translation of latin text by Fyodor Petrovsky. *The Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. Publishing House.* Moscow—Leningrad. 452 pages.

It is now 2,000 years since this brilliant book, combining poetic fancy with profound philosophical insight into the essence of nature was written. For the occasion the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. has published a new edition of the poem in translation. The book carries the Latin and Russian text, it has 17 small woodcuts by Belov and a commentary by Academician Vavilov. The chief attribute of Petrovsky's translation is the exactitude with which he has conveyed the meaning of Lucretius' poem. Lucretius' popularity in Russia is due first and foremost to the fact that his works have brought to us through thousands of years the highest achievements of the materialistic philosophy of antiquity. Summing up the four centuries of development of the atomic theory in the ancient world and again confirming this theory, Lucretius, the philosopher and poet, put the concept in a highly artistic form and created his didactic poem, a rare example of the full and harmonious confluence of lofty poetic form with profound philosophic content. At the same time the poem reflects the level of the natural sciences in antiquity.

The translation of the poem was first published ten years ago while it is reprinted in the present edition for the third time. It is in the same metre as the ancient original.

A Handbook on the 18th Century Russian Literature

History of Russian Literature, Vol. 3. Literature of the 18th Century. Editors, Professors Gukovsky and Desnitsky. *The Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. Publishing House.* Moscow—Leningrad. 421 pages.

The History of Russian Literature in ten volumes undertaken by the Institute of Literature of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., is one of the biggest works tackled by Soviet literary workers. The volume under review covers the development of literature in Russia from the time of Peter the Great to Sumarokov.

The volume is divided into two main parts:

he Literature of the reign of Peter the eat", and "Lomonosov and his Contempo-ies". The volume begins with a chapter n the Threshold of a New Literary Epoch" owing the traces and vestiges of the old erature prior to Peter the Great in th-century literature. Of the chapters aling with Peter's times Professor Yere-n's *Playwrights of Peter's Times* and Pro-sor Rozanov's *Poetry of Peter's Times* are narkable for their wealth of facts. Interesting e Kuz nina's articles about stories of Peter's nes, the Ukrainian Academician Gudzy's count of the works of Feofan Prokopovich and ushkin's *Publicists of Peter's Times*. Of excep-nal interest are Pumpiansky's chapters Kantemir, the fable writer, and Tredia-vsky, the poet. The latter is indeed the st wholehearted attempt at research into e poet's works, unappreciated by his own d succeeding generations, but nevertheless rming a worthy part of Russian literature. ntolsky's work on Lomonosov reveals commendable endeavour to portray the illiant scientist and writer in all his great-ss.

In general the volume is a valuable aid to e study of Russian 18th-century literature d a substantial contribution to Soviet lit-ry research.

New Materials About Griboyedov

Professor Militsa Nechkina. *The Police Case Against A. S. Griboyedov. The Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. Publishing House.* Moscow-Leningrad. 96 pages.

The author of the book tries to deal with a problem that has long been confronting Russian historians—to give an all-round analysis of the police case against Alexander Griboyedov, the author of the famous comedy *Wit Works Woe*, for his part in the Decembrists Conspiracy in 1825. In her research Nechkina has put four main questions: 1) Did Griboyedov know of the Decembrists secret society. 2) Was he a member of the secret society. 3) What was behind Griboyedov's meeting with the southern Decembrists in June 1825, and 4) why did the investigation of Griboyedov's case end in his release.

By minute analysis of the documents at her disposal Professor Nechkina proves that the examination of Griboyedov's case was broken off before the truth was reached. In her opinion this is to be ascribed not so much to the intercessions of influential relatives as to the political calculation of Nicolas I who thought he could arrange for Griboyedov's removal later without fuss or painful consequences.

Professor Nechkina's book is a valuable contribution to research into the Decembrists' movement and sheds light on a new aspect of Griboyedov's character, on the man who founded Russian classic playwriting.

THE 1946 ART EXHIBITION

Plans for this year's national art exhibition were laid during the war; the preparations were completed in peacetime.

Paintings, sculptures and drawings by artists of different generations, schools and trends in Soviet graphic and plastic art meet the eye in infinite variety as one passes through the halls of the exhibition. The efforts of Soviet artists to capture in their own particular medium the epic events of the war have produced works that reveal strenuous searching after new forms, new devices and new principles of the esthetic treatment of real life.

If asked to name the distinctive traits of the 1946 art exhibition we should unhesitatingly say that the central figure on the stage, the hero of these canvases and sculptures — is Soviet man who passed the acid test of war and at the cost of such tremendous sacrifice, achieved victory. To reveal his personality in all its versatile psychology, to sing the courage and strength of his affections and his hatreds was the motive that guided brush, pencil or chisel, as together with their people the artists passed through trials and hardships untold, their talent maturing and gathering that purity of emotion without which any great art is unthinkable.

We cannot, however, omit mentioning that not all our artists are keeping abreast of the swift onward movement of Soviet art. Some, lacking the fine sense for modernity, remain unresponsive to the demands of a new estheticism. Others lack the power to clothe obviously interesting conceptions in forms of adequate expressiveness; others still are impeded in their quest for new traits by the fetters of old and exploded traditions.

These, however, are but growth pains; legitimate ailments, temporary roughnesses on the road of Soviet art progress. And though they are retarding the development of painting and sculpture, they can in no wise be considered as determining factors in Soviet art.

There can be no doubt that recent years have seen a steady improvement in standards of excellence. Works of considerable importance and originality have appeared. With their roots in the best traditions of world and Russian art, our painters have blazed new trails, attaining consummate skill and opening a new style-phase in the development of socialist realism.

II

The new trends in Soviet painting can best be traced by comparing the characteristic elements of the thirties with those developed during the forties. Although it was during the former period that our artists first aimed at creating typical images of events and personages of contemporary Soviet life, the art of creating a type was at the time approached somewhat superficially. The image evolved was not a generalization of the manifold phenomena of life but a set of salient characteristics treated in isolation from reality. Only in rare cases did the lyrical element come into its own. A portrait was not the living picture of a human being but representative of a particular field of public activity. A landscape as often as not was a report on canvas of new industrial buildings or collective farm fields. Pictures in the decorative or the illustrative genre were predominant. Nevertheless, those years mark an epoch of no little importance in the development of our art. It was then that our artists were seeking to embody the image of the new Soviet man and then too that the struggle against the formalistic conception that had so long been a drag on the forward march of realistic art was consummated. It was during those years that the foundations of a new style were laid.

But it would be an error to suppose that having overcome formalism Soviet artists immediately achieved that mastery of form which had been the aim of their endeavours. In the thirties, problems of form had been relegated to the background, to be tackled and solved only insofar as they were indispensable for presentation of the declarative or illustrative image.

What Soviet artists endeavour to portray on their canvases today is modern life in all its varied aspects, seeking for such design and effects of light, shade and colour as would adequately convey the objective beauty of the life around them. Basing themselves on the achievements of the thirties, they seek to convey in their art integrity of feeling and purity of emotion. Hence the triumph of the poetic element in later Soviet art, hence, too, the ardent desire to contemplate the sensuous beauty of the world.

Soviet art has made important strides towards singleness of artistic conception and that classical purity of form united with an emotional perception of the world which in bygone days were inherent in the art of the great masters.

Fyodor Bogorodsky's *Glory to the Fallen* (Stalin Prize Winner for 1945) which is among the most interesting of the pictures on view, is one of those nearest to the thematic canvases of the thirties. True it still bears traces of a studied rhetoric but the real strength of the painting lies in its powerful emotional appeal, the sincerity of grief, the sustained atmosphere of mourning. The sharply defined rhythm resembling a solemn funeral march, recalls a classic bas-relief. It is a requiem to the memory of heroes who fell in the patriotic war; a dirge sorrowful, sad and yet aglow with an inward

Four Veteran Soviet Painters *By Alexander Gerassimov*

radiance. The kneeling figure of the naval officer is supremely impressive; it is the life force asserting itself in an otherwise tragic atmosphere.

All the more is it to be regretted that Bogorodsky did not bring his other figures up to the same high level. There is almost a poster-like quality about the infantrymen standing behind the coffin, and the sentimental tones in which the mother of the dead hero is presented, are sharply at variance with the austerely restrained quality of the canvas as a whole.

It is characteristic of this exhibition that most of the pictures are not so much a portrayal of particular war episodes as of the emotions engendered by the war. Even Mikhail Avilov, that notable master of battle-painting, has devoted his *Don Cossacks Swearing Their Oath of Allegiance* not to the heat of the fighting but to the nobility and courage of Soviet soldiers preparing for action.

Speaking of the battle-piece proper, we should like to dwell at greater length on Alexander Deineka's *Parachute Descent*. There is much formal brilliance about this picture. One is struck by the elaborate originality of the composition... The startling foreshortenings, the almost still-life aspect of the canvas. Not man, but fire and steel—hard and cold elements are the artist's real hero. The picture stirs the eye without touching the heart. And yet in his other canvas on display, *Wide Expanses*, Deineka, who is a painter of great talent, expresses a youthfully joyous sense of life.

The monumental canvases of Fyodor Shurpin and Arkadi Plastov (Stalin Prize Winner for 1945) are pervaded with the optimistic world outlook that is so marked a feature of Soviet art. Shurpin strives to create a symbolic generalization in *Resurrection*—the name itself conveys the breadth of conception. The painter's formal searchings are synthetic in their nature; he tries to unite into one whole the sculptural lines of the figures in the foreground with the delicate picturesqueness of the landscape that forms the background.

The picture is not without its shortcomings; there is a certain pretentiousness—an all too evident borrowing from Millais, and one not fully absorbed at that. But the female figure of the sower is endowed with an ardent longing for peaceful labour. The soil of the homeland as Shurpin presents it seems to thirst with desire to be fertilized. Almost anthropomorphous, the huge glebes strived and tense, are awaiting the life-giving seed. They still bear upon their bosom the cursed scars of war—the anti-tank ditches. But the joyous sunrise, the boundless steppe, the exhilarating freshness of early morning—all breathe their hymn to peaceful labour.

Plastov treats the theme differently. There is nothing of the rhetorical here. A painter of wholehearted and vigorous emotions, he speaks of the simple and sincere joy of communion with nature, a communion always active. His Russian peasants are seen either at work or in the brief intervals of rest. They exhude vitality, are sturdy in build, and sound in body and mind. Like his heroes, Plastov does not merely contemplate the beauties of the landscape but seeks to penetrate the depths of nature.

Harvest. By Arkadi Plastov

The present exhibition, however, enables us to observe certain changes in the devices used by this painter. While in the *Harvest* Plastov seems to record his visible impressions—whence the luscious texture and colouring—in *Haymaking* he has tried to find a light, decorative expression to convey the glory and gorgeousness of nature in her midsummer bloom. The picture is highly spectacular, it captivates by the dazzling colour, the palpable freshness of the out-of-doors.

On Recaptured Land is another important canvas from the brush of Dementi Shmarinov, creator of many drawings, who now comes forward for the first time as a painter. Like Shurpin in *Resurrection*, Shmarinov resorts to combining foreground figure groups with an extensive background of landscape. Shurpin has created a poem solemn and sublime, while Shmarinov's painting is a lyrical narration. The former's *Sowers* are symbolic images; the latter recounts an individual and unique genre situation. Shurpin is tensely agitated; Shmarinov—calmly contemplative.

And for all that, the two pictures have something in common. On closer scrutiny we have no difficulty in detecting lyrical strains in Shurpin's work and poetical symbolism in Shmarinov's, particularly in the landscape treatment.

The individual and the typical, lyricism and impressive grandeur, simplicity, courage and tenderness are all combined in the best monumental and genre canvases on view at the exhibition. In their inner complexity can be divined one of the chief peculiarities of the art of the forties.

The new works exhibited by Soviet masters are evidence of the triumph of a profound imagery over a superficial narratory schematism; of the expression of great ideas in form, colour and line.

It is not the pictorial situations that attract in the paintings of Plastov, Shurpin or Shmarinov. The artists reveal the visible beauty of the world whether perceived in its lyrical charm (Shmarinov) or in its primeval elemental forces (Shurpin); or with Plastov's clear-cut plasticity. In these works there is no dividing line between idea and form. They balance each other, as interwoven elements of an artistic whole.

In their latest pictures Plastov, Shurpin and Shmarinov, like many other Soviet painters, do not narrate; they present. They have placed the art of painting once more in possession of its old lawful rights.

Historical canvases occupy a comparatively modest place in the exhibition. And for the greater part they are lacking in originality and profundity of thought and convey but the external aspect of historical events. That evaluation applies to the huge canvases of Vladimir Serov (*Entry of Alexander Nevski into Pskov*) and to Gavriil Gorelov's *The Bolotnikov Uprising*, in which the style of Surikov, the great master of the historical genre, has been mechanically copied.

The merits of Sergei Gerassimov's *The Pugachev Uprising* are disputable to a degree. The work contains much that is inventively picturesque, and some of the figures are interesting. But Pugachev himself is insignifi cant and the crowd thronging around hin but feebly conveys the image of a people i rebellion. Neither the elemental forces no the historical meaning of a popular revol is revealed in the picture.

The composition of *Loriston Visiting Kutu zov* by Nikolai Ulyanov, one of the oldes Russian painters, is cleverly and subtly con ceived. There is an inner and profoundly dra matic meaning in the contrast of pose an bearing between the Russian general and th French diplomat. The clash of personalitie reveals a collision pregnant with historica contradictions.

Mikhail Deregus, the Ukrainian painter is represented by an interesting series of fiv small compositions devoted to Bogdan Khmel nitsky. Here is romance without affectation an the heroic thrill without a shade of artificiality

Particularly good is the meeting of Bogda Khmelnitsky with the Cossacks, a study i which the artist's fiery temperament deploy itself to the full. In romantic tensity as wel as in certain artistic devices the work is rem iniscent of the canvases of Delacroix.

The profundity of the scene, and the finis of the composition and colouring would in dicate that there is every chance of this stud developing into a fine historical canvas.

Gorky on the Volga, is, perhaps, the mos appealing of all the historical canvases o view. It is by a young painter, Victor Tsyp lakov, who makes his debut at the exhib tion. There can be no doubt of its being success. The picture, besides possessing th charm of youthful freshness, reveals though and admirable craftsmanship. The image the great writer in the early days of his ca reer, the years of his wanderings and firs romantic poems, are portrayed with subtl skill. We see the huge figure with its shoc of hair flying in the wind, in a coat careles ly flung over the shoulders. Gorky is stanc ing on the bank of the Volga, leaning agains a pile of boxes. It is not his romantic appea ance and pose, but the tense concentratio the strength and vigorous force stamped the face that lend such power to the portrai The Volga scenery is just as we imagine from Gorky's descriptions.

The authors of the other historical canva es have created nothing worthy of not Pavel Sokolov-Skalya's *Ivan Grozny a Vladimir Staritski* is the usual tableau period costume.

Certainly this time the historical gen has failed to win for itself the leading plac The true spirit of history makes itself fe with greater poignancy in the modern piece There is nothing surprising in this. For th painters of the forties are eyewitnesses ar contemporaries of epic events, the significan of which transcends any happenings bygone epochs.

In presenting the new morale of the So iet man in his private and public life, th painter stresses not generalizations but i dividual and unique traits revealing th typical qualities of Soviet people of our da

Most of the portraits lining the walls the exhibition are serious, thoughtful a

Vide Expanses. By Alexander Deineka

expressive in execution; this mode of treatment is manifest pre-eminently in the portraits of Soviet leaders. There is none of the cold, official, representative figure here. The people's leaders are an embodiment of its best moral qualities. Convincing proof of this may be seen in the portraits of Generalissimo Stalin by Dmitri Nalbandian (Stalin Prize Winner for 1945) and Alexander Gerassimov, and that of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, V. M. Molotov, from the brush of Vassili Yefanov.

There are numerous portraits of Soviet military leaders who distinguished themselves in the Patriotic War. In this series *Marshal Zhukov* by Pavel Korin occupies a place all its own. Korin is a great master of the technique of graphic art. A portrait painter par excellence, he chooses for his models people gifted with outstanding creative powers and strength of character. The Korin portrait of Zhukov is most impressive. The painter has successfully conveyed the monolithic character, the wholesome self-confidence, in a word, the greatness of one of the outstanding generals and heroes of the war. But the famous Marshal as presented by Korin seems clad in a mail of proud aloofness. The painter has shown the illustrious and victorious army leader, but where is Zhukov, the hero beloved of the people?

In the double equestrian portrait of General Tatarinov and Colonel Turchaninov by Constantine Kitaika, the dignified restraint of the faces and figures accentuates the integrity, strength and versatility of character of the two army leaders.

A stormy, passionate temperament is brought out in Fyodor Modorov's portrait of S. A. Kovpak, the famous partisan general. Behind the man's fiery nature you feel his concentration and a lifetime's experience.

Alexander Gerassimov and Vassili Yefanov, who did the compositional group-portraits of the Teheran and Crimea conferences and the Moscow Conference of the Three Foreign Ministers, have produced works pregnant with historical significance. The pictures are extremely life-like.

Another commendable work by Gerassimov is a group of four veteran Soviet painters. The artistry here is remarkable; the arrangement of the figures a most happy one, each portrait original and individual. The scene lives—you can hear the man speaking, you might almost yourself be taking part in the friendly, animated talk.

Conspicuous among the series of portraits of prominent figures in our art intelligentsia created by the prolific brush of Alexander Gerassimov is the portrait of Igor Grabar, painter and art scholar.

A Girl From Moscow District is a delightful lyrical portrait. Serov's tradition of the outdoor portrait has been ably carried out by Grigori Shegal—figure and landscape blending harmoniously, the young girl as pleasing to the eye, as serene and pensive as the summer day which the artist has chosen for his background. She combines the spontaneous freshness of youth with the repose of an inquiring and well-balanced mind. Through the personal, the painter conveys the typical; through the individual, the general—a method resorted to by the best Soviet artists, making their works incomparably more convincing than the schematic abstractions of the type portrait of the thirties. This is, to our mind, one of the salient

features among the new tendencies in Soviet art.

Never before has landscape held the important place in Soviet painting it does in the current exhibition. This applies not only to landscape proper: in many monumental works, genre and portrait compositions, natural scenery is a leading element. We have already mentioned the role of the landscape background in Shurpin's *Resurrection*, Plastov's *Haymaking* and *Harvest*, in Shegal's *A Girl From Moscow District* and some of the other pictures. It is an interest revealing the depth of philosophic outlook of the Soviet modern who, while a fighter for the realization of his ideals, is a thinker with a gift for deep lyrical contemplation.

However different may be the manner of presenting natural scenery in every individual case, we see in most of the works the same wholehearted perception of nature and the same objectivism in its interpretation.

In the pictures of Nikolai Romadin, one of the outstanding masters of Soviet landscape, these qualities are most apparent. His small canvases show such fresh and vivid feeling for nature, the composition is so pleasantly concise, the colouring so delicate. Romadin loves best the sequestered vales of the Russian countryside, such as we see in *Village of Khmelevka*, *The Road*, or *Last Days of Autumn*. But he does not always treat his subjects with the same tranquillity. There is romantic exaltation in his latest canvas—*The Last Beam*. The forest flushed with the crimson glow of sunset, the majestic beauty of his native scenery are conveyed with joyous inspiration.

The traditions of 19th-century Russian landscape painting live again in the works of Grigori Shegal. They involuntarily recall the views of Sylvester Shchedrin, and even more forcibly the sketches of Alexander Ivanov. And yet Shegal unquestionably ranks with the most original masters of our day. His is the material plastic manner of presentation. In contrast to Romadin, who has a predilection for breadth of view, his landscapes deploying as far as the eye can see—Shegal's closed-in compositions have almost the intimacy of an "interieur", a genre which stresses the forms and physical quality of the colouring.

There is maturity of feeling and craftsmanship in some of the landscapes by painters of the older generation. In the *Valley of Ararat*, a landscape by the remarkable Armenian painter, Martiros Saryan, the native qualities of Armenian mountain scenery find subtle interpretation in a broadly decorative style. Saryan's landscape is delightful as much for its intensive colouring and clear-cut drawing as for the refreshing originality of a treatment singularly free of the accepted cliché manner.

In Vassili Baksheyev's *Old Birches* and *Birch-Wood* translucently pure emotion is admirably conveyed by a skilful brush guided by good tradition.

Valley of Ararat. By Martiros Saryan

The landscapes of Pyotr Konchalovsky and Sergei Gerassimov, with their spontaneous, joyous treatment of nature, are brilliant specimens of craftsmanship; without striving for philosophical generalization, both artists manifest a vivid, optimistic conception of the world in paintings breathing the very poetry of nature. The execution of either is unmistakably individual, Konchalovsky lingering on the material plasticity of forms, the lusciousness of colours and the technique of surfaces, while Gerassimov's landscapes are penetrated with a delicate appreciation of the lyricism of Russian scenery. Utilizing the best that impressionistic tradition has to give, Gerassimov does not always, however, overcome its limitations.

Many other Soviet artists besides Gerassimov who hitherto leaned on the dictates of impressionism, are now drastically reshaping its methods in the light of realistic principles. In their strivings to depict the beauty of reality in all its objective fulness and variety, they are abandoning as a matter of course the subjective perception of nature that is the hall-mark of impressionism: a process that has resulted in a deeper appreciation of imagery in landscape painting.

The Kukryniksy, [1] to take a case in point, in renouncing their old partiality for impressionism in landscape, have certainly gained a great deal, their work having acquired a singleness of conception and a new finish of execution.

The same dominating tendency to give an objective picture of the life of nature in her manifold variety is apparent in some interesting works exhibited by Yuri Pimenov and Alexei Gritsai.

III

Among the sculptures on show at the exhibition the individual portrait holds the centre of the stage—and this is perhaps the most conspicuous of the new tendencies prevalent in the sculpture section of the exhibition.

Far removed from us now are the days when Soviet sculpture in quest of new forms turned to cubism and constructivism or, falling into another extreme, contented itself with superficial illustrative solutions seeking the substitute for plasticity in a naive naturalistic gesticulation. By the thirties Soviet sculpture had already attained, as had also painting—considerable creative achievements. But the best works of those years are for the most part works in monumental plastics. Interest in the latter has always been one of the distinctive traits of Soviet sculpture.

It should be mentioned in this connection that the best works of the thirties were produced in association with architects and were in the form of images symbolic in meaning and monumental in form. The collaboration was productive of fairly good results in the designing and erection of public and municipal buildings.

Some of the monumental sculptures of that period will live in the history of Soviet art as admirable specimens of the new style. These include the monument of Lenin by Ivan Shadr for the dam of a hydroelectric station in Transcaucasia; the statue of Stalin by Sergei Merkurov for the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition; Vera Mukhina's *Worker and Woman Collective Farmer*, a two-figure composition in stainless steel which crowned the Soviet pavilion at the Paris International Exhibition, and the reliefs of Georgi Motovilov in Electrozavodsk Underground Station in Moscow.

The monumental sculptures of the thirties embody the typical characteristics of the Soviet citizen. The effort to portray the new men and women in all the complexity of their mentality was as yet but feebly expressed and resulted in a gallery of abstract standardized images: a worker, a Red Army-man, women collective farmers, an athlete, a pioneer. The sculpture of the forties, on the other hand, finds expression in an exclusive interest for the personality with its own inimitable characteristics and the individual qualities by which our sculptors seek to depict traits of a national character.

It may well be this desire to gain an insight into the soul of the artists' contemporaries that accounts for the marked growth of portrait sculpture in our days. In contrast to the expositions of recent years there is a large number of busts and comparatively few group-compositions in the halls of the National Exhibition. There are a number of portraits of heroes who have distinguished themselves in the war; the sculptors have portrayed personalities whose destinies are interwoven with those of the people, personifying the people's will; their mind and their courage.

Soviet sculpture can pride itself on masters who know how to convey in a portrait the complexity of the heroic. Veniamin Bogolyubov, the Leningrad sculptor, in his statue of Marshal Govorov, has created an image of great depth and force. He does not succumb to the lure of the time-honoured pattern; the prescribed gesture, the effective pose. Here is the simplicity of genuine art—the thought expressed in precise and sparing lines; severe composition of the figure, every gesture of which has meaning. A hand held behind the back; one foot slightly advanced, the light movement of the head; the relaxed bearing—what dignity in the whole thing!

There is no restless gesticulation. Truth is born of an intensive inner life. The portrait of the man and the presentation of the army leader blend into an indissoluble whole.

Few succeed in achieving such harmony. The portraits of heroes sculped by Mikhail Olenin are good as studies but they do not attain to the image, nor do they fully convey the personality. And many of the other busts, too, though broadly conceived are lacking in observation of vital details. They are over-decorative.

In his bust of Lieutenant Yusup Azizov, Dmitri Tsaplin, who is a master of wood-carving, by omitting individual peculiarities has constructed an impersonal image of the

[1] A collective pseudonym of the painters Kuprianov, Krylov and Sokolov.

General Chernyakhovsky. Sculpture by Evgeni Vuchetich

hero where only the characteristic national traits have been preserved.

Tsaplin's art is laconic in the extreme, in striking contrast to an extensive series of portraits by Evgeni Vuchetich executed in flamboyantly decorative style. An able sculptor, Vuchetich aims mainly at romantic effects. His bronze busts of Marshal Zhukov and Generals Chernyakhovsky and Rudenko are imposing in composition and ornate in form. It is undeniable that to Vuchetich belongs the merit of reviving the state portrait whose traditions in Western-European and Russian sculpture have long become things of the past. His portrait of General Chernyakhovsky won the Stalin Prize for 1945.

While in Soviet sculpture the traditions of the heroic and the historical portrait are still in their initial phase, the psychological portrait of the forties is a genre already mature in conception and form. There is a whole gallery of representatives of this portrait genre at the exhibition. One sees works of varied and at times even contrasting styles of interpretation. The characteristics and boundaries of a genre are at best conventional, and yet with all their differences, portraits of Vera Mukhina, Zinovi Vilenski, Sara Lebedeva and Dmitri Schwartz, Ilya Slonim and Sergei Popov, Grigori Kepinov and Iracli Okropiridze possess a common quality. They reveal, in the words of Rodin, the soul of the model. "A good bust," Rodin said, "is worth a whole biography."

It is indeed a profound biographical image that we have in Mukhina's portrait of Academician Krylov (Stalin Prize Winner for 1945); the simple peasant face with the square-cut beard and lowered lids is illumined with thought, the features are distinctive and characteristically national.

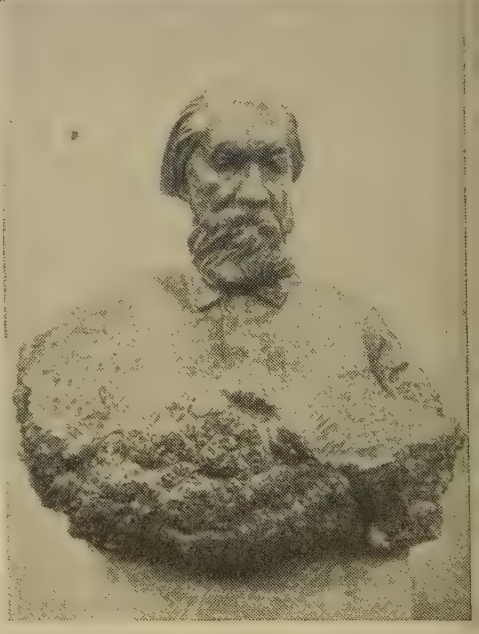
Vera Mukhina leaves nothing unsaid, nothing irrelevant. She does not copy nature, she studies it, re-creating her models in conformity with an image already conceived. Her portraits are vigorous in structure and careful in finish. The sculpture of the conductor Mravinsky is as monolithic as the powerful bust of Krylov carved in wood.

Naftal Rappoport belongs to the same school of plastic synthesis; under his hand, marble reveals its noble potentialities; there is delicate poetic charm in his *Portrait of an Actress*. This female figure purified of everything petty and trivial, like most of Rappoport's portraits, seems to breathe of chastity and moral strength. The beauty of lineament is but the expression of a beautiful soul.

And even when, as in the *Portrait of a Partisan*, the image contains something of the abstract, it nevertheless embodies the grandeur of heroism and the lofty morale of Soviet woman.

In contrast to Vera Mukhina and Naftal Rappoport the works of Sara Lebedeva, Leonid Sherwood, Yakov Nikoladze, Ilya Slonim and Grigori Kepinov are markedly impressionistic. The portrait is not born of a pre-formed conception, but of a visual perception of nature formed spontaneously. In the best specimens of this school, as for example in the portrait of the Georgian poet Chakhrukhadze by Yakov Nikoladze (Stalin Prize Winner for 1945), however, the element of the accidental aspect, so essentially a factor of impressionism, is superceded by complex and finished psychological characteristics.

In the domain of the intimate psychological portrait, Soviet art has produced no rival to Sara Lebedeva. Her more recent work



Academician Krylov. Sculpture by Vera Mukhina

represented by busts of the writers A. N. Tikhonov (Alexander Serebrov) and General Alexei Ignatyev enriches portrait sculpture by new devices of extreme refinement. The glimmering texture, the rich play of light and shade, the skilfully modelled relief—all help to create a life-like portrayal. Just as the living human face changes before our eyes, passing from brightness to gloom, from reserve to candour, so do Lebedeva's portraits likewise alter their expression with a shifting of the light or a change of position.

In an admirable bust of Academician Evgeni Tarle, Ilya Slonim has accentuated somewhat more sharply perhaps than does Sara Lebedeva, the salient features—nose, mouth and angle of the chin—giving to his sculpture an expression of vigorous manhood. After being engaged on sketches and studies for years, Slonim has now mastered the psychological portrait.

Studies were for a long period a necessary and important phase of development both in Soviet sculpture and painting and although the importance of the study as a form of realistic reproduction of nature cannot be overrated, it is nevertheless not a finished work of art, but only a preliminary experiment.

In his busts of the aircraft designers A. J. Shvetsov, and Hero of Socialist Labour S. A. Lavochkin, Zinovi Vilensky has only partially succeeded in trying to expand a study into a portrait sculpture. The same is true of the busts by Joseph Chaikov.

And yet it must be said that the works of both Zinovi Vilensky and of Joseph Chaikov have long since passed the bounds of the study pure and simple. The new statue of Mayakovsky by Chaikov embodies a conception that is both clear and mature. Freed of the redundant details of the early variants, the figure of the poet—the result of years of work—has acquired force and monumental expressiveness.

Perhaps, it is this effort to outgrow the study phase, in some cases undoubtedly facilitated by working in hard sculptural material, that explains the success of Sergei Popov's sculpture of his son, a bright child-like image in tenderly, modelled marble, and of the head of the writer Z. S. Imedashvili, hewn out of a block of stone by the talented Georgian sculptor, Iracli Okropiridze.

And finally, even with such an experienced master of the portrait as Dmitri Schwarz, the merits of his several busts are proportionate to the extent to which he has left the mode of the study behind.

The large portrait series created within recent years by Dmitri Schwarz, some of which are on view at the exhibition, contain, besides several studies, works like the busts of the artists Shurpin and Vatagin, sculptures which are finished in form and admirable in psychological quality. It is when working in hard material, however, that Schwarz attains the greatest excellence of line and form. It is true that his marbles—*Bust of Hero of the Soviet Union Lyudmila Pavluchenko* and *Head of a Girl* are somewhat cold. But there is no denying the manly expressiveness of the image conveyed in mellow and sympathetic manner in the *Bust of the Hero of Socialist Labour A. T. Tretyakov.*

There are only a few sculptures not belonging to portrait genre at the present exhibition. But in many of these too, in design of monuments, statues and smaller figures, it is always the same problems that are under solution. Portrait statues, portrait monuments, portrait miniatures—we see the all-pervading interest in the personality manifesting the deeply humanist tendencies prevalent in Soviet culture.

In designs for monuments by Georgi Motovilov, Vsevolod Lishev, Soslambek Tavassyev and Isaak Mendelevich, the portrait retains its significance as part of the general problem of the monument.

There is Vsevolod Lishev's statue of the famous Russian physiologist, Academician Ivan Pavlov. The portrait figure is mounted on a column, with a dog standing by his side. The intimacy of the tone brings this monument close to the garden genre of sculpture.

Worthy of mention is Isaak Mendelevich's simple and heroic statue of the airman Valeri Chkalov, one of the earliest Heroes of the Soviet Union.

Another interesting work is a design of an equestrian statue of the Kirghiz hero, Salavat Yulayev. The author, Soslambek Tavassyev has deftly introduced style elements of the old oriental miniature, which lend his subject the characteristic national Kirghiz traits. Only an all-round inspection of the effigies of horse and man can give an adequate idea of the energetic movement and expressiveness of the whole.

In the work of Soslambek Tavassyev the portrait element is subordinated to the historical. In contrast to this a design exhibited by George Motovilov stresses the faithfulness of the likeness to the original—the writer Alexei Tolstoy. There is a predominant interest in the personality, in all that pertained to the spiritual image of Tolstoy as a writer. The artist has used the contemplative pose—natural and unaffected—book in hand, the overcoat flung open.

Sergei Merkurov's granite effigy of Alexei Tolstoy shows a different treatment, and has all the strength and importance of a monument. The head and shoulder portrait emerges from a huge block of stone to reveal the familiar features of the writer. As usual in monumental sculpture, the finer psychological touches are absent, the conception being dominated by a single idea, this is the image of a man of lofty thought and a spontaneous freshness of mind.

Sergei Merkurov's conception of war events is peculiarly his own. A master of monumental sculpture, he has striven in this particular case for the maximum generalization. The memory of airmen who have died for their country is immortalized in a statue of Icarus, whose tragic image embodies the fearlessness and supreme daring of youth. Artists have turned before now to the Greek myth of Icarus: he figures in the reliefs of the Villa Albani at Rome and there is a picture of him in one of the mural paintings at Pompei. In modern times we have seen Icarus embodied in an exquisite sculpture by Rodin.

Sergei Merkurov's Icarus is a development of Rodin's idea; in the Soviet sculpture the

dynamics of the feature and the general monumental expressiveness are intensified. If the Icarus of Rodin is distinguished by lyrical feeling and a gentle plasticity of execution, Merkurov's Icarus is the embodiment of the daring exploit in all its tragic sublimity. In art as in life, the greater the restraint with which an emotion is expressed, the more deeply we are stirred by it. And it is in restraint carried to its extreme that lies the dramatic force of a sculpture by Joseph Rabinovich. Two grief-stricken figures form the composition of *Home Again*, a woman and a child who have experienced the boundless anguish of losing their loved one. The scene is presented with austere laconism. No lamentation, no sobbing—this is silent weeping with clenched teeth—a profound and unadorned image of human woe.

Ekaterina Belashova-Alexeyeva's *Morning* is bright and happy. Her statue presents the age-old image of motherhood; the earthly Madonna and child. The inspiration of Raphael and Leonardo is embodied here in the figure of a young Russian woman light of bearing with a face radiating serene joy.

In the last halls small sculpture pieces are on view: *Bears*—very expressive by Anton Starkopf; *Gambolling Kid* by Vassili Vatagin; compositions compactly carved in marble and wood by S. Palis, and a statuette of a girl combing her hair—slight figure delicately modelled by Lina Po, the blind sculptress.

The art of the sculptural miniature undeservedly neglected since the time of Paolo Trubetskoy and Ilya Ginsburg is revived in the portrait statuettes of Nikolai Nikogosyan marvellously executed pieces—light and replete with force and life.

The rhythmic movement of Alexander Deineka's *Running Race* and the dash of Sergei Popov's *Cavalry* and Zinaida Bazhenova's gracefully coquettish *Uzbek Girl With Kid* display modern motifs in miniature sculpture.

Sculpture in porcelain glowing with vivid colours and glaze occupies a special department all to itself. Few artists work with this material, which has many advantages but is difficult to handle. It needs an enthusiast to master its vagaries. In the *Parting*, a genre scene, we recognize the individual style of Isidor Frikh-Khara; and in *Girl Embroidering* and *Kirghizian Girl*, the lyric style of Maria Kholodnaya. The works of these sculptors, true to their former traditions, are excellent specimens of domestic ceramics—they do not, however, strike the imagination so powerfully as does the porcelain of Sergei Orlov.

Sergei Orlov possesses an outstanding talent—he is a master of form and colour, possessing taste and creative imagination. Author of *The Mother*, a monumental dramatic work, and a water colour painter, Sergei Orlov appears in his porcelains as a gay and clever narrator of some of our wonderful popular stories—of the Fisherman and the Golden Fish, of Ivan the Fool, of the Little Prince and the Grey Wolf, of the Goblin and His Pipe. Or again, discarding smiles and jests he rises with truly Homeric impressiveness to epic narration and creates his Alexander Nevski—a masterpiece in porcelain sculpture.

The decorative style of Sergei Orlov as original and national as the Russia *loubok* or the painted toy from Viatka, whic charm us with their naive sincerity and quain ness of conception. But of course, the a of Sergei Orlov bears the mark of professiona proficiency. A wide range of compositiona devices—an admirable technique, richnes and truth of colouring—all contribute to th rare symphonic mastery of this sculpto

The Art Exhibition of 1946 is irrefutabl evidence of the uplift in Soviet cultural lif One would look in vain for the bitternes and frustration, despair and disappointmer that made themselves so poignantly fe in Western-European art after 1918, and whic might seem to have been inevitable after th cataclysm of World War II. But this wa has brought no art crisis in its wake. Th unity and vigorous morale of the Sovie people in the great struggle have pre-deter mined the postwar florescence in our ar its extended scope of conception and thirs for continuous improvement. Out of the matur ity which our artists, together with the Sov iet people, as a whole, acquired during th war days, a pronounced progress in Sovie painting and sculpture has been born. A we can see by the present exhibition, this i essentially an enhanced capacity for thinkin in images. A poetic interpretation of lif now lies at the basis of work in art. This new wider and more complex attitude toward artistic presentation could not but lead t searchings for greater expressiveness of form Questions of mastery have become crucia problems in our art. An emotional perceptio of life and its embodiment in images profoun in idea and finished in form have becom the groundwork for the new conception art. Therein lies the distinctive trait of th new style phase in socialist realism, the fru tion of which is duly recorded in Nation Art Exhibition of 1946.

These different features and tendencies both the individual and those common all our artists—in no way exclude varie of creative trends, styles and modes. Th exhibition and the exhibits taken separate show that the esthetic conception of socialis realism offers the widest scope for untra melled development of individual and gro peculiarities in both painting and sculptur

In conclusion one more important aspe of the exhibition should be noted: the mul national character of the pictures and scul tures displayed. The people of every repub of the Soviet Union who are now free to devel their constructive capacities have produc many highly gifted masters. The Armenia Martiros Saryan and Nalbandian, the Uzb Ural Taksynbayev, the Ukrainian Alexei Sha kunenko, the Esthonian Ilmar Oyalo, t Georgian Yakov Nikoladze and the Byelorussi Zair Azgur, together with men of dozens other nationalities in friendly unity w the masters of the first among equals—t Russian Republic—are working at perfecti the art of the Soviet peoples, an art that national in form and socialist in content.

ALEXANDER KAMENSK
MARK NEUMA

NEWS AND VIEWS

LITERATURE

In the Institute of World Literature

A three-day scientific session at the Gorky Institute of World Literature aroused considerable interest among literary circles in Moscow. The Conference Hall was filled to overflowing. Among those present were representatives of different departments of the Academy of Sciences, of the Moscow University, members of V.O.K.S. Society, press representatives, and foreign diplomats.

At the opening session Professor Kirpotin read a paper entitled: *Lenin and Stalin on the International Significance of Leo Tolstoy.* Yakovlev, a member of the research staff of the Institute read another paper *On the Study of the Literary-Esthetic Views of Lenin.*

In a detailed analysis of the Lenin essays on the great Russian writer, Professor Kirpotin pointed out that Lenin while not a professional literary critic and one who never took upon himself to present a detailed analysis of Tolstoy's literary craftsmanship, had, in a few short essays revealed the very essence of the great realist's writings and his place in world literature.

Referring to Tolstoy's popularity in the Soviet Union, Professor Kirpotin recalled how in the hour of the country's danger Stalin had placed Tolstoy among the great names that were a pledge of our victory over the enemy.

Yakovlev has collected and systematized a number of Lenin's observations concerning literary and esthetic matters of which no study had hitherto been made. Besides using Lenin's works dealing with the history of literature and literary criticism, the author adduced various references by Lenin on literary-esthetic questions, such as the quotations from writers found throughout his works; biographical material characterizing Lenin as a man of letters and publicist; his letters to different people, among them to Maxim Gorky; his correspondence apropos editorial matters; notes made on the margins of books; certain numbers of newspapers and journals reflecting Lenin's interests in the domain of literature.

Basing himself on these data, Yakovlev showed that in his observations on literature Lenin developed the esthetic teachings of Marx and Engels, and at the same time carried forward the traditions of the Russian classical school of esthetic thought, the esthetics of Pushkin, Belinsky, Herzen, Chernyshevsky, Plekhanov and Gorky.

On the second day of the session two papers were read on the role of Russian writers in world literature, viz., *Russian Influence in Western Literature* by T. Motyleva, and *Peculiarities of Russian Literature* by A. Zeitlin.

Tamara Motyleva, member of the research staff of the Institute, spoke of the influence of Russian literature on Western writers during the second half of the 19th century, and on the false and one-sided interpretation of some aspects of Russian literature by certain writers of the reactionary decadent trend. Beyond the borders of its native land Russian literature had passed through complicated phases of attraction and repulsion. Under varying conditions of country and epoch, the Russian classics were regarded differently by different Western writers. But considered as a whole, Russian literature had in recent times become an important factor in the development of Western literature.

In the interpretation—as expounded by the Russian school of estheticism—that a work of art is the fulfillment of a public mission, Western writers found an antidote to the theory of art for art's sake. We have only to recall the influence of Turgenev and Leo Tolstoy on their Western contemporaries to confirm the truth of this statement.

The moral grandeur and the humanism of Russian literature were contrasted to the amoral philosophy of the decadence with its indifference to human personality.

Running right through Russian literature is the theme of the injustice of the exploitation of man by man, of confidence in those who laboured, and its inculcating in the mind of the reader a hatred for reaction in all its forms and manifestations.

Every genre of Western literature was dealt with in turn—the novel, the short story, drama, and lyric poetry, the author showing in his paper the influence of this or that Russian writer on each department of letters.

In his paper *Peculiarities of Russian Literature,* Alexander Zeitlin compared the path of Russian literature with the development of the major literatures of Europe. In its earlier phase Russian literature was outstripped by the advanced countries of Western Europe; Italian literature having produced the first writers of world significance as early as the 13th to the 14th centuries; the Spanish, French and English in the 16th and 17th centuries and the German in the 18th.

Historically, Russian literature developed under conditions much less favourable to its growth. For two hundred and fifty years Russia languished under the Tartar invasion nor was the period that followed less adverse to its development. It was only during the 18th and particularly in the 19th centuries that Russian literature made a rapid advance and in the course of the two centuries passed through the various phases of classicism, sentimentalism and romanticism. The strength of Russian classical literature lies in the affinity of its bonds with the people. It was through leaning on the people that its basic method—that of critical realism was evolved. The latter, developing earlier in Russia than in the West, reached its apex in the latter half of the 19th century, at a time when the literature of the West was in one way or an-

other in the throes of a crisis in ideas which hampered the development of realism. This was the period when with its entry into the family of European literatures, Russian literature began to make its influence more and more felt.

The first paper read on the third day of the session touched on the questions dealt with by Motyleva and Zeitlin in their investigations. The researches made by V.Kuzmina, as her paper showed, had led her to study the position of the ancient Russian literature among the contemporary literatures of the East and West.

The concluding item on the programme of the session was a paper read by Professor Brodsky on Lermontov's poem dedicated to the famous Battle of Borodino. This poem, with its realistic picture of Borodino, initiated a new tradition in the Russian literature bearing on the war with Napoleon.

The story of the battle is put into the mouth of an ordinary soldier whom the poet has made the hero of that historic event. Lermontov's *Borodino* has had a powerful effect in inculcating feelings of lofty patriotism.

The lively discussions evoked by the various papers were convincing evidence if any were needed of the interest in the session. Among those who took part were representatives of the press, research institutes and schools of higher learning, including members of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences—Academicians A. Beletsky, and N. Gudzi, and M. Nechkina, Doctor of historical science.

Literature in 1945

At an open session held at the Institute of World Literature the results of the year's work in all genres were reviewed; addresses were made by critics and literature scholars. Grigori Brovman and Evgenia Knipovich spoke on the prose works of 1945; Corneli Zelinski on poetry, and Mikhail Gelfand and Joseph Yuzovski on recent dramatic works.

It was generally acknowledged that prose occupied the leading place during 1945. Among the books that came up for discussion were Alexander Fadeyev's *Young Guard*; Fyodor Panfyorov's *The Struggle for Peace*; Valentin Katayev's *Son of the Regiment*; Valentin Ovechkin's *With Greetings From the Front*; Mikhail Prishvin's *The Storehouse of the Sun*, and *People With a Clear Conscience*, a book of memoirs by General Vershigora, a film director who became a famous guerrilla leader in the Ukraine.

Concerning the poetical works that appeared during 1945, Corneli Zelinski in an interesting paper discussed *The Victory* by Margarita Aliger; *The Road* by Olga Bergholz; *Verses About Love* by Stepan Shchipachev; *Verses From Afar* by Evgeni Dolmatovski and poems by Constantine Simonov and Boris Pasternak. Works by the poets Semyon Gudzenko, Galina Nikolayeva, Valentina Tushnova, Mikhail Dudin, and others who made their literary debut in 1945, were also mentioned.

Prominent among the plays discussed were Pogodin's *Creation of the World* and Constantine Simonov's *Beneath the Chestnuts of Prague*, and also *Old Friends*—a play by a young writer Leonid Malyugin, about which there were conflicting opinions. Not only were the merits or shortcomings of single works in one or another genre debated, but general problems bearing on the development of literature received due attention, such as the question of craftsmanship and the relation between tradition and new trends in dramatic forms.

Corneli Zelinski discussing the treatment of the personality of the Soviet man, in lyrical poetry, expressed the view that the driving force in lyrical poetry was ever the individuality of the poet, the urge of his inner life—provided he is a genuine poet—to reflect the history and the life of his people. And at the present time, the representation of personal life, through the medium of the lyric, is of the greatest interest both as an expression of the growth and development of Soviet democracy and of the unfolding of the bounteous nature of the Soviet man.

During the discussion on the subjects of tradition and modernity, it was stressed that the reliance on tradition has nothing in common with the imitation of great works of the past, in the same way as the element of novelty, far from being a subjective effort on the part of the author, is the expression by new artistic devices of new realities aided and enriched by the experience of the past.

In a paper devoted to the drama the author advanced the idea that the literary qualities of a play should be the main consideration in appraising its merits. A play was pre-eminently a literary work; a critical standpoint which should never be subordinated to the glamour of scenic effects.

The Institute decided to hold annual sessions devoted to the results of the year's work in the literary field.

Papers on Western Literature

In the Western Department of the Institute of World Literature meetings are regularly held on questions of English and American literature. The themes discussed of late indicate the interest displayed by Soviet literary people in matters concerning the interrelations and the mutual influence exercised by Western and Russian literatures.

In a paper on Tolstoy and Galsworthy, D. Zhantieva referred to the close kinship between the writings of Tolstoy with his high moral standards of judgement and the classical realistic novel in England. Galsworthy was among the first of the 20th century writers to come under the influence of Russian literature. He appreciated deeply the art of Turgenev and as he came up against the straight-laced traditions of the departing Victorian age he drew near to the ideas of Tolstoy. Galsworthy's writings bear the influence not only of Tolstoy the artist but also of Tolstoy the thinker. Both writers, the Englishman and the Russian, contrast a life close to nature with the soulless realism of technocracy and urban civilization. Both strive for the ideal of individual improvement as a means of overcoming social injustice and see in Christianity the hope of achieving spiritual harmony.

The author of the paper quoted copiously

rom interesting material:—Galsworthy's own vords and passages in his letters showing iow profound was his sympathy with the vorks of the great Russian writer. Zhantieva ound unmistakable traces in Galsworthy's vritings of the influence of Tolstoy's ideas nd methods—in part in *The Island Pharisees*, *Fraternity*, and *Freelands*. Her scrupulous analysis and convincing selection of quotations revealed the bonds linking *Anna Karenina* with Galsworthy's *Man of Property*. Both novels pose the same problem of the amily in a society of property owners.

In the ensuing discussion, the importance f the questions involved was duly stressed. Different writers had expressed different ppreciation of the Russian classics. Those who vere influenced by the conceptions of the decadence accepted their weaker sides. Some f the speakers correctly pointed out that Galsworthy had absorbed the strong and constructive aspects of Tolstoy's genius. Through Tolstoy, Galsworthy comprehended the moral randeur of Russian literature; its assertion f the dignity of man and of esteem for man; f the feeling of responsibility for one's actions—of all those traits, in fact, that were ontrary to the amorality of the decadence chool and the indifference of the positivists.

Nikolai Pozharsky's paper on *The Literary Reputation of Dostoyevsky in the West, and His Influence on Western Literature* cquainted his listeners with a collection f materials which is being prepared for ublication by the staff of the Central Library of Foreign Languages. The volume is bibliographical reference book containing pronouncements on Russian writers (Turgenev, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, and others) by Western writers, critics, and literary scholars. The authors have selected a considerable mount of material culled from biographies f prominent critics, their diaries and correspondence; from newspaper articles, press eviews, etc. Speaking of Dostoyevsky's ole in England, N. Pozharsky pointed out hat his influence had passed through several hases. English writers and critics having merged from the initial period of curious nterest and outward imitation, settled lown to a profound penetration into the creative art of Dostoyevsky as realist and psychologist.

The announcement of the new publication met with approval. It was pointed out that the book would place at the disposal of critics and students of literature a wealth of material which until now had been often inaccessible and but little known.

In the Writers' Club

A book called *Russian Engineers* by Lev Gumilevsky was the subject of a recent discussion at the Moscow Writers' Club.

In this book Gumilevsky, who is the author of a number of popular science books, deals with the development of engineering thought in Russia.

"This is the first attempt at recording the history of Russian engineering", said the writer Oleg Pissarzhevski.

The author had recourse to vast historical material. A mere listing of names and people mentioned by the author, said the writer Alexander Bek, is evidence of the labour expended by Gumilevsky upon his book.

"The artistry of a work," said Constantine Fedin, "is determined by the impression produced on the reader's emotions. In this aspect Gumilevsky's book is the work of an artist and his books are genuine specimens of belles-lettres."

A high appreciation of *Russian Engineers* was given by the famous scientist Academician Kapitsa, in a letter read at the meeting.

The House Where Mayakovsky Lived

Deep in a courtyard in a quiet Moscow side-street stands the two-storeyed wooden house in which the poet, Vladimir Mayakovsky, lived.

In this house, now converted into a museum, everything speaks of the life and labours of the poet; his personal belongings—a notebook written over with his verses—the open pages of books, brightly coloured posters announcing Mayakovsky's public appearances in towns all over the country. The poet's published works consisting in all of ninety-nine books printed during his lifetime are preserved in these rooms.

Vladimir Mayakovsky's study

Documents bearing on the last years of Mayakovsky's life are objects of particular interest. The following entry has been preserved concerning his appearance on January 21, 1930, in the Bolshoi Theatre at the memorial meeting dedicated to Lenin, where he read an excerpt from his poem *Vladimir Ilyich Lenin.* Mayakovsky was greatly agitated. "This is a moment of great responsibility," he said, "Stalin will hear me speak."

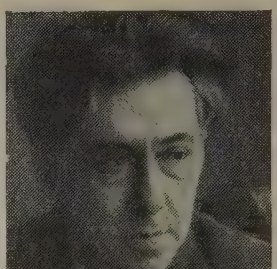
During the war years Mayakovsky's verses were read eagerly by the men in dugouts in the front-lines. There is a letter in the museum telling the story of a small volume of Mayakovsky's verses that found its way to embattled Stalingrad. Red Armyman Kirilov, a warm admirer of the poet, loved to recite Mayakovsky's verses to his comrades. To his great regret he hadn't a single copy of the poems with him. He wrote about this to the Mayakovsky Museum and received in reply a small edition which he never parted with. On December 25, 1942, during one of the daily enemy air-raids, a bomb splinter pierced Kirilov's tunic and the kit bag containing the precious volume. The splinter stuck fast in the book, leaving Kirilov himself unharmed.

Here is another war-relic—sent from East Prussia by Sergeant Trefilov. Trefilov had treasured a Mayakovsky photo all through the war. When the cease fire sounded he sent the picture to Moscow with the following inscription: "We fought together from the year 1941 to 1945. On May 9, 1945, we celebrated victory together. Thank you, Vladimir Vladimirovich Mayakovsky, for the help you have given me! Sergeant Vladimir Trefilov." During the war Mayakovsky's name figured on the steel coating of a plane; on the stern of a submarine; on the turret of a tank. The "Vladimir Mayakovsky" tank donated by Vladimir Yakhontov, the actor, covered a distance of nineteen hundred kilometres. Here is a model of the tank, and alongside it a postage stamp bearing the portrait of Mayakovsky and the date: "1893-1943". The stamp was issued on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the poet's birth and on it are a few lines by Mayakovsky dedicated to the Red Army.

The museum was founded in 1937. In the library attached to it a number of people may be seen daily working on Mayakovsky's books. Recently an interesting exhibit reached the museum from Yugoslavia. During the German occupation a Serbian schoolmaster buried a collection of Mayakovsky's books. When the Germans were driven out, this admirer of the Russian poet recovered the volumes from their hiding place and dispatched them to Moscow.

During the sixteen years since the poet's death, his works have appeared in forty languages of the peoples of the Soviet Union, over ninety million copies in the Russian language alone. His poems have been translated into twenty foreign languages: Engllish, French, Bulgarian, Dutch, Spanish, Italian, Chinese, Norwegian, Polish, Rumanian, Serbian, Finnish, German, Czech, and others.

Ilya Ehrenburg at Home



The mornin mail has ju come in. Fro South Americ it has brough the writer collection of h articles transla ed into Spa ish; from He sinki, a Finnis translation the *Fall of P ris;* from Be grade, a Yug slav edition the same novel. Ehrenburg's *Fall of Par* has found its way to many foreign countrie It has been translated into fifteen language In 1942 it won a Stalin Prize for its autho

In the author's study four shelves of large bookcase are entirely filled with fo eign editions of his works. Here, in a crimso binding are two collections in the Serbia language, and three similar volumes publishe in China; here translations into Albania and Arabian. An edition that Ehrenbur treasures is a series of small pamphlets co taining his writings mimeographed on a underground press in Croatia in January 1943, for circulation among the partisan Hanging on the wall is an old-fashione pistol presented to Ehrenburg during h Balkans tour by an old Montenegrin. Th pistol was a family relic handed down fro father to son.

At the moment Ehrenburg is engaged a novel which he has called *The Storm* The scene is laid in the Soviet Union, Fran and Germany during the years 1939-194

"In my novel," Ehrenburg says, "I wa to depict the lives of ordinary men and w men; to describe not only their actions b also their states of mind; to explain ho people could endure the strain of the wa I want to show the struggle of our gre people against the fascists linked up wi struggle of other nations, in part with th people of France whom I know and for who I have a great affection."

The first part of the novel describi events in the year 1939 in Moscow, Ki and certain towns in Germany, is alread completed.

Ilya Ehrenburg has prepared a book verse for the press (written between 19 and 1945) and a collection of postwar essay *Roads of Europe.*

A Friend of Our Young Historians

As we enter the room a tall, dignifi grey-haired man in a general's uniform ris from his writing-table and comes forwa to meet us. This is Alexei Ignatyev, lingui and diplomat, and the author of those i teresting memoirs *Fifty Years in Service.*

Among the schoolchildren and indeed a youth of the U.S.S.R. a great interest in Ru sia's past history is to be noted. A clo

friendship has sprung up between the author of *Fifty Years in Service* and young people keen on studying history. Ignatyev initiated and carried out a fascinating and instructive game dedicated to our heroic cities. In that game some twenty thous and of Moscow's schoolchildren took part, by writing poetry, stories and essays on Leningrad, Stalingrad, Sevastopol and Odessa, and making drawings of Moscow Region where the great battle was fought in 1941. A society of young historians has been formed in Moscow with General Ignatyev as President and Lev Kassil and Samuil Marshak, the children's writers as Vice-Presidents. The members of this juvenile society are now busy studying the history of Moscow in connection with the forthcoming 800th anniversary of the capital in April 1947. The history of the city's streets, squares and monuments and the biographies of eminent Moscovites are the objects of eager study.

Ignatyev's book *Fifty Years in Service* has won immense popularity. The author is now engaged on Part V of the book, the chapters embracing the period beginning with February 1917—and recording the author's life abroad where he held several diplomatic posts and his return to his native country.

The concluding pages of Part V of General Ignatyev's memoirs will be devoted to a description of the 1937 May Day Parade on Red Square.

Writer and Democrat

Fyodor Reshetnikov died seventy-five years ago. The sixties of the 19th century are known as the date of the appearance in Russian literature of the "Raznochintsi" writers, i.e., men who did not belong to the nobility, but came from the ranks of civil servants, merchants or peasantry. One of these writers was Fyodor Reshetnikov.

This group had its literary organ in the *Sovremennik* (Contemporary), a magazine sponsored by the poet Nekrasov, in which publicists and critics, like Nikolai Chernyshevski and Nikolai Dobrolyubov collaborated. The *Sovremennik* was in the vanguard of Russian progressive literature.

The son of a postman, Fyodor Reshetnikov spent a hard and joyless childhood in a small town in the Urals. On leaving school he found miserably paid employment as a clerk in the district court. Appalled by the bribery and corruption that surrounded him, the young man tried to voice his indignation by putting his feelings to paper. In his earliest works—a tale called *The Violin Player*, and a drama *The Dissenter*, he gives a realistic picture of the life of factory workers in the Urals.

In 1863 Reshetnikov moved to Petersburg where he was doomed to the semi-starved existence of a minor official so powerfully described by Gogol in his tale *The Overcoat*.

A year later another of Reshetnikov's tales entitled *Podlipovtsi* depicting the impoverishment of the Urals peasants appeared in the pages of *Sovremennik*. Its publication brought fame to the writer. The pictures of the wretched lives of workers and peasants aroused the sympathy of the revolutionary democratic intelligentsia of the sixties. The austere truth of Reshetnikov's writings was highly appreciated by Nekrasov.

In 1865 Reshetnikov journeyed to the Urals where he worked in the factories in order to acquaint himself at first hand with the dreadful conditions prevailing there. The result of his observations was a novel entitled *The Miners* which was followed by *The Glumovs* and *Where Things Are Better*. In the latter story Reshetnikov tells of the first attempts of the workers to stand up for their rights; he describes how class consciousness was born in the minds of the Russian proletariat.

A Russian Woman Who Supported Garibaldi

Maria Altayeva, well-known authoress, is busy on her new book *Memorable Meetings*. One of the chapters is dedicated entirely to a certain A. N. Yakobi, a prominent social worker of the sixties of the last century, who was known as "Garibaldi's Russian Female Disciple".

Yakobi carried on a correspondence with Leo Tolstoy, was on terms of friendship with the writers Nekrasov and Leskov, and was an ardent advocate of the rights of women. She edited the magazines *Zhenskoye Dyelo* (Women's Cause) and *Igrushechka* (The Toy). Yakobi took active part in Italy's struggle for national liberation, which was headed by Garibaldi—hence the proud appellation of "Russian Disciple of Garibaldi". This memorable episode in her biography is narrated in detail by Altayeva.

In 1869, A. N. Yakobi was in Rome with her husband who was an artist. At that time the local hospitals contained numbers of wounded prisoners—men who had been fighting under Garibaldi. The young Russian woman did what she could to ease their sufferings. One day Garibaldi himself who was aware of her sympathetic efforts approached her through an acquaintance with the request to aid the flight from prison of a certain Luigi Castellazi, friend and associate of Garibaldi, who was incarcerated in the castle of San Michelle, under sentence of death. The plan of the escape had been carefully worked out and it was now necessary to inform the prisoner of the details.

A. N. Yakobi spoke Italian like a native. She appeared before the Governor of the prison and announcing herself as Castellazi's betrothed implored permission for a last interview with the prisoner. Touched by the beauty and pleadings of the young woman the Governor granted permission for a ten-

minute interview to take place in the presence of the warder. Until that day Castellazi had never seen his pretended betrothed—a careless word or gesture on his part might have spelt disaster. Things went off smoothly, however, and Yakobi contrived, unseen by the warder, to transfer a note to the prisoner. A few days later Castellazi escaped.

Shortly after this episode, Yakobi made the acquaintance of Garibaldi, visiting him on the small island of Caprera. In 1872, in a letter addressed to her Garibaldi wrote: "Through a great Russian woman I send heartfelt sincere greetings to your brave people who are destined to play their part in events of world importance."

THEATRE

Jubilees of Soviet Theatres

The Russian Theatre in Tbilisi, capital of Georgia, has just celebrated its centenary. This theatre, named after the playwright Griboyedov, has a fine tradition. Famous actors of the Russian stage considered it a great honour to be invited for a season in Tiflis (Tbilisi). This tradition is kept up in our day and the company numbers many versatile Russian actors.

At the centenary celebration, which was attended by leading actors, directors and writers of Soviet Georgia, the writer Shalva Dadiani spoke of the important role exercised by the Russian theatre in Georgian culture.

At about the same period the Kazakh Soviet Republic celebrated the twentieth anniversary of its national drama theatre.

The Kazakh State Theatre was opened in 1926 in the town of Kzyl-Orda. Its founders were young Kazakh actors. Prior to the Revolution the people of Kazakhstan knew no theatre art, but folklore was carefully preserved in the country. It is therefore not accidental that the first play on the boards of the theatre was *Enlik Kebek* by the young Kazakh playwright Mukhtar Auezov. The play was a stage version of the folksong of the same title.

Soon, however, classics of world dramaturgy appeared on the stage of the Kazakh theatre. It has produced Shakespeare, Pushkin, Ostrovsky and Gogol, and plays by the Soviet playwrights Constantine Trenyov, Dmitri Furmanov and Nikolai Pogodin.

Translation of these plays into the Kazakh language, and their stage production raised the standard of acting, and stimulated the appearance of new plays by national playwrights.

The Kazakh plays *Tungi Saryn* by M. Auezov and *Amangeldi* by G. Musrepov, came to life in this manner and are based on the same theme—the struggle of the Kazakh people for liberty and independence.

Twenty years ago a new Russian Theatre was founded in the Ukraine. The theatre was created with the idea of continuing the traditions of a famous Kiev theatre, founded in 1891 by Nikolai Solovtsov, a celebrated theatre director of those times.

The young theatre successfully produced *The Stone Lord*, a Ukrainian variation of the Don Juan theme, by the poetess Lessia Ukrainka. After this production the theatre was named after Lessia Ukrainka.

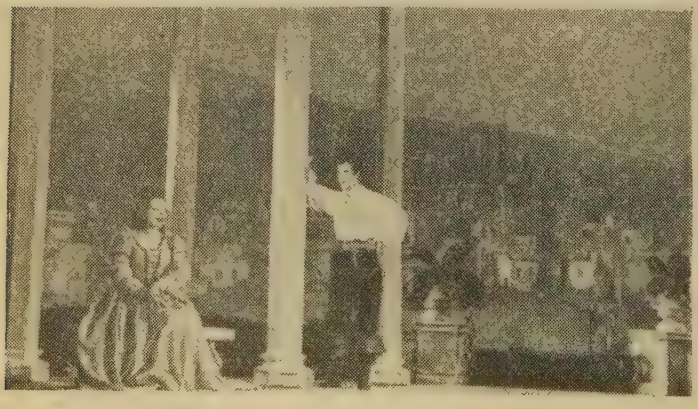
The present repertory of the theatre contains the best of the Russian classics: Leo Tolstoy's *Living Corpse*, Ivan Turgenev's *A House of Gentlefolk*, Alexander Ostrovsky's *Belugin's Wedding*, Alexander Griboyedov's *Wit Works Woe*, and modern Soviet plays such as *Simple Hearts* by Constantine Paustovsky, *Fieldmarshal Kutuzov* by Vladimir Solovyov, *Invasion* by Leonid Leonov, *Kremlin Chimes* by Nikolai Pogodin.

The Dancing Master

Although Lope de Vega's best plays have for decades enjoyed great success on the Russian stage, only now is the Soviet spectator seeing the *Dancing Master* by the great Spanish playwright of the "golden age" staged by the Central Theatre of the Red Army. The translation, excellently done in verse, was made specially for the theatre by Tatiana Shchepkina-Kupernik, well-known poetess and playwright.

Aldemaro, an impoverished but enterprising young nobleman, in love with Florela, penetrates into her father's house in the disguise of a dancing master and soon wins the confidence of the entire household. Then follows an intricate web of intrigue and amusing situations of which the Spanish playwright was such a master.

But the key to the success of the play with the Moscow spectator is not limited to the intricacies of the plot. The theme of the play



The Dancing Master. *Act II*

Lady-Minister.
Act II

bout the right to happiness and courageous struggle for true love appeals to the Soviet audience.

Vladimir Kantzel, the director, while retaining the charm of the old "comedia del capo i espada," has succeeded in adding poignant freshness and poetry to the play. Vladimir Zeldin, as Aldemaro, brings to the stage the fervour of youthful passion. His sincerity and temperament charm the audience, while his excellent performance of intricate Spanish steps draws rounds of applause.

The music by Alexander Krein, composed specially for the play, contributes to its success. The composer used authentic Spanish melodies. Castanets and the guitar are heard in the orchestra, accompanying the numerous Spanish dances, excellently choreographed by Vladimir Burmeister, choreographer of the Spanish ballet *Lola*. Stage designer Ivan Fedotov sketched a beautiful panorama of a southern city, enveloped in a sultry mist, and a moonlit garden with magnificent statues and murmuring fountains.

The production is musical, picturesque and lively, and is a big hit with Moscow audiences.

Lady-Minister

The theme of *The Lady-Minister*, the play by the Serb playwright Bronislav Nušič, has much in common with Molière's *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*.

Živka Popovič, wife of a minor official, is a narrow-minded, vain woman who tries to climb the social ladder, when her husband suddenly receives a Ministerial portfolio. She carefully imitates the dress, manners and mode of life of society women. Dreaming of a career for her married daughter, she tries to arrange a divorce with her husband with the intention of marrying her off to a rich and influential gentleman. All her scheming, however, ends in a public scandal, as result of which her minister-husband is obliged to resign. The "Lady-Minister" once more returns to her former obscurity.

Yuri Zavadsky, art director of the Mossoviet Theatre and director of the play, treated *The Lady-Minister* as a satirical farce.

The audience roars with laughter at the pitiful attempts of Živka Popovič to ape the aristocrats and at her vulgar and stupid behaviour. The title role is played by Vera Maretskaya, one of the most popular of Soviet stage and screen actresses.

R. Platt in the role of Ninkovič, the Minister's secretary, gives a sublimely grotesque impersonation of a society dandy and loafer.

Operatic Youth

Constantine Stanislavsky devoted the last years of his life to his latest creation, the Opera and Drama Studio. Stanislavsky staffed his studio with talented young people and announced his motto: "From school to the theatre!"

After Stanislavsky's death the leadership of the Studio fell to his closest disciple Mikhail Kedrov. The young group soon grew into a professional theatre, though it still retained the name of Studio.

In its short history it has had numerous successes. Not long before the war the Stanislavsky Studio staged Chekhov's *Three Sisters*, a production filled with fragrant charm.

In 1943 the Studio produced Robert Sheridan's *Duena*, a performance of rollicking mirth and youthful fervour. Modern plays by Sergei Mikhalkov and Veniamin Kaverin, based on the wartime life of Soviet people, are also running in the Studio Theater. In *Farhad and Shirine*, the Studio had recourse to an ancient Azerbaijan legend, a touching love story.

The aim of the Studio is to educate not only dramatic actors, but also opera singers.

Princess Mary (based on a Lermontov theme), a new opera by the young Soviet composer Vassili Dekhterev, was produced by the Studio during the war.

The Studio's latest opera is Otto Nikolai's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. When Mistress Ford and Mistress Page appear before the footlights they seem to emerge straight from the gay music of the overture. The histrionic

character, created by the youthful Elena Shevtzik in the part of Mistress Ford, merges harmoniously with Nikolai's lilting music. Vladimir Andrievsky as Sir John Falstaff succeeded in creating a vivid portrait of the old rake, who does not spare even himself in his buoyant humour.

Director Georgi Kristi has successfully avoided heavy, static scenes, and produced an opera which is picturesque and delightfully gay and witty.

A Great Actor Lived Here

In a quiet Moscow street there is a big house, largely populated by theatre people. A door on the ground floor bears the nameplate "Boris Shchukin". This was the home of the well-known Soviet actor, who created the image of Lenin for the theatre and the films. Shchukin's career as an artist was bound with that of the Vakhtangov Theatre.

Everything in the actor's study is preserved as it was during his lifetime. On the walls hang a portrait of his teacher, Evgeni Vakhtangov, and numerous portraits of writers, including one of Gorky, presented by the author to Shchukin after the premiére of the play *Egor Bulychev* in which Shchukin played the title role. A portrait of the actor Ivan Moskvin, presented to young Shchukin in 1922, bears the inscription "I like you, and am convinced that you'll do well."

On the desk there are phonograph records of two speeches by Lenin. Shchukin studied them carefully, when rehearsing for the play *The Man With a Gun* and the films *Lenin in October* and *Lenin in 1918*. Shchukin succeeded in reproducing the nuances of Lenin's speech to such an extent, that at times members of his family were not sur whether it was Shchukin speaking behind th closed door or the Lenin record.

Alongside the records lies a copy o Shchukin's last part, that of the Governo in Gogol's comedy *Inspector-General*. Shchu kin appeared at the dress-rehearsal, but th premiére never took place.

The last book which Shchukin read wa Diderot's *Paradox of an Actor*. He died in fac with the book in his hands. He had place his spectacles between the eighth and th ninth pages in place of a bookmark. The boo is preserved in his study just as the actor left it

The museum is supervised by Tatian Shukhmina, the wife of the late master o the Russian stage, and herself an actress

Le Carnaval

Le Carnaval *in the Soviet Ballet*

Schumann's *Le Carnaval*, a suite of inti mate, impressionist sketches, originally no intended for any histrionic impersonation has not been choreographed in Russia sinc Fokin's famous *Le Carnaval* (1910). At tha period romanticism in the style of E. T. A Hofman and Robert Schumann was ver close to the "fin de siécle" atmoshpere o Fokin's artistic circle.

The great Russian critic Pissarev said tha there are two kinds of romanticism: th romantic dreams of one "are ahead of th natural progress of events" and serve as stimulant, while the efforts of the other a limited to evading the realities of life.

Gorky distinguished two phases of roma ticism: the active phase with a desire strengthen the will for life, and awake in man the dream together with a revo against part of the reality, and the passi phase with the only purpose of diverti attention from reality.

Fokin's *Le Carnaval* was subtle a indefinite, leaving the spectator to form h own impression of the idea. The very scc of Schumann's music so typical of romanticis and known to be autobiographical, is permea ed with this subtlety and impressionis Fokin set his ballet in a definite historic period, making his heroes, with the exce tion of Harlequin and Pierrot—real peop wearing costumes of the fifties, crinolin and peg-top trousers. And yet he deliberate left much unsaid. It goes without saying th the inspired acting of Tamara Karsavi Nizhinsky and Fokin himself created m of the atmosphere of that charming ball

Time passes, and in art, as in everything el nothing stands still. No theatrical piece ne be produced today as it was done yesterda

We, therefore, consider that Vladimir Bu meister, Stalin Prize Winner, the talented you choreographer of the Musical Theatre nam after Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenk was justified in refusing to copy Fokin *Le Carnaval*.

While Fokin had real people acting in unreal manner—Burmeister interpreted t music as a gay carnival with the traditio masques of the commedia del Arte, but h Columbine and Pierrot, and particularly Pa taloon, love and suffer as ordinary peop would in similar circumstances. This is a

justified. Schumann named his sketches "Carnival of human emotions".

The spectators at any rate seem to appreciate the story and are moved by its emotional side. Columbine is interpreted as seeking a mate worthy of her troubled soul. Nor is she moved by Harlequin or Pierrot or Pantaloon. She awakens only when she meets the Dreamer.

Harlequin is the only character done in the traditional style of the masque, Pierrot is a youth, a mere boy (and therefore danced by a ballerina), while Pantaloon completely falls out of the masque pattern—he is neither funny nor grotesque but deeply human. This, together with the excellent acting of Ivan Kurilov, a versatile dancer, explains why Pantaloon, all of a sudden, dominates the ballet almost becoming its principal character.

The Dreamer, a Wertherian character, is portrayed with his usual talent and plastic perfection by Alexander Krein, the theatre's leading male dancer.

One should not conclude that these complex psychological states are expressed through pantomime. The action in Burmeister's ballet develops through the dance. Dances do not perform the role of a "divertissement" as in the traditional classical ballet, though there are plenty of dances, solos, duets, and quartets, and a riot of dance for the corps de ballet which is one of the features of this ballet. As a matter of fact it is fully in the carnival tradition, since it plays a role similar to that of the choir in Greek tragedy.

Maria Sorokina is a charming Columbine. Whether the Spanish partisan Lola or the suffering masque in quest of her dreamer, she is always a heroine with her regal posture and movements. Columbine is the first role in which this ballerina has been able to reveal the concealed range of her emotions.

The ballet company of the Musical Theatre founded by Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko is considered one of the most interesting in the Soviet Union. Experimenting with short ballets rather than three-act ones, the company is always seeking new forms, and the result has had a decided influence on the development of the Soviet ballet.

During the war, the company matured considerably. In Moscow during the stormy period of 1941 it produced *Straussiana* and the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, later to be followed by *Lola* and *Scheherezade*.

A sense of continuous moving on the next plane never leaves this company and from this point of view the new ballet, liked by some and disliked by others, is a definite step forward.

ARTS

Vladimir Favorsky

Artistic illustration is an inseparable companion to the book. The drawing—vignette, tail-piece and ornament—all help to complete the visual impression, nay even the comprehension of a book.

This is brought home to everybody who enters the studio of the venerable Russian

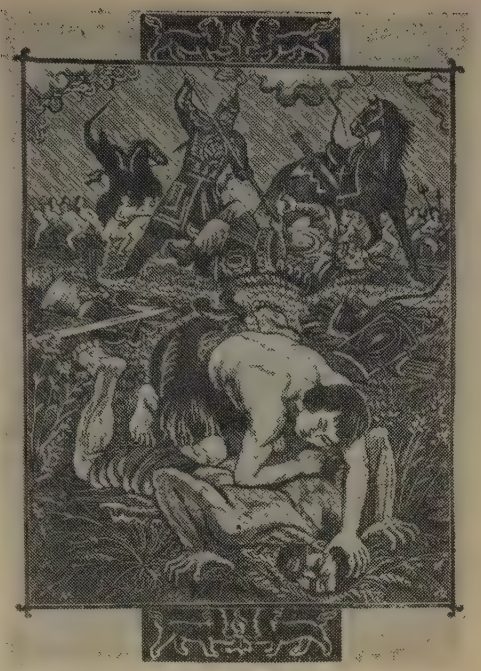


Illustration to Jangar, *by V. Favorsky*

artist, Vladimir Favorsky, author of numerous engravings and illustrations to some of the best known works of Russian and world literature. His drawings transport the reader into ancient Russia, to Italy in the epoch of the early Renaissance, into the 19th century, the days of Pushkin, Gogol, and Tolstoy.

Among the hundreds of engravings and drawings for books made in the course of a lifetime of creative effort are illustrations to the *Lay of Prince Igor*, a literary relic of 12th-century Kiev Russia; to Alexander Pushkin's *Little House at Kolomna*, Anatole France's *Abbe Coignard*, Prosper Merimée's *Theatre*, etc., etc.

The artist's favourite material for the clichés is samshit: the durable Caucasian wood.

Favorsky displays a preference for a single colour. "Indian ink is the best thing there is. With it you can express anything you like," Favorsky said, quoting an ancient Chinese dictum as he opened before us a folder containing a series of engravings of Samarkand. And indeed, though the drawings are done in the black medium of Indian ink you feel in them the sun and langorous heat of Central Asia.

Favorsky is versatile in his art—he does not confine himself to black-and-white. A connoisseur of monumental painting he is the author of several ceilings and frescoes gracing different Moscow buildings, the House of Pioneers, for example, the Mother and Child Welfare Museum, and one of the stations of the Moscow Underground. Other works of his hands are the scenery to Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, Lope de Vega's *Dog in the Manger*; Molière's *Don Juan*, and Pushkin's *Mozart and Salieri*. When

Illustration to Shakespeare's Richard III *by F. Constantinov*

working on V. Soloviev's *The Great Tsar* at the Vakhtangov Theatre the artist made long studies of chronicles, archive records and ikonography of the 16th century. For over twenty-five years Favorsky has been teaching his art to others and numbers among his pupils such notable artists as Yuri Pimenov and Alexander Deineka.

This 60-year-old master is now at work on illustrations to *Othello* and a series of portraits of Russian military leaders.

Book Illustrations

An exhibition of works by artists who illustrate books for juveniles has been organized by the *Children's Literature Publishing House.*

The most widespread form of modern book illustration in the country is xylography, or wood-carving.

A series of excellent woodcuts to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* is the work of a young artist, F. Constantinov. He has created laconically expressive images of men and women of medieval England and typical genre scenes. Constantinov has furnished miniature engravings, depicting Russian landscape to accompany a collection of verse by Fyodor Tyutchev, a notable Russian poet of the 19th century.

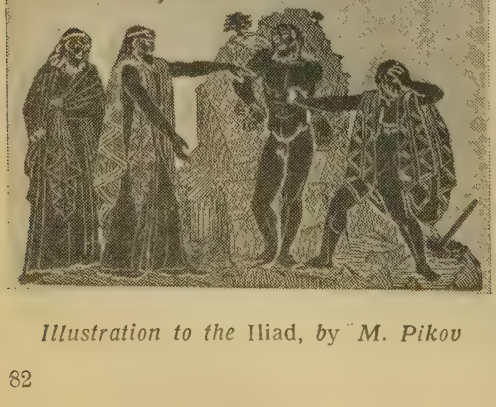


Illustration to the Iliad, *by M. Pikov*

The engravings by A. Goncharov to selected stories by Prosper Merimée admirably convey dynamics of the action and the peculiar atmosphere of the romantic narrative.

Proficient xylographers have placed their services at the disposal of our best illustrators. Engravings made from the drawings of N. Kuzmin to Nikolai Leskov's *A Will of Iron* are flesh of the flesh of the book, enriching it with images expressively delineated, aptly-seized detail and life-like scenes. This method of book-illustration, now almost forgotten, was once widely used by Gavarni, Doré and other famous masters of the art. In the numerous coloured illustrations to the *Masquerade,* Lermontov's drama, Kuzmin has displayed a delicate taste and genuine understanding of the romantic spirit of the piece.

The illustrations to Gogol's *Taras Bulba* by E. Kibrik are in the genuine realistic style. The artist gives a talented portrayal of national characters, creating a monumental epic in black-and-white.

Very good are D. Shmarinov's pictures to Alexei Tolstoy's novel, *Peter I.* True to the writer's conception of the personality of the tsar, the artist portrays the great reformer against the background of the stormy life of the Russia of that epoch.

The charm of Eastern poetry is conveyed with excellent taste by L. Bruni in his illustrations to *Lyrics* by Nizami, the Azerbaijan classic poet. In the drawings to *Madame Bovari,* Milashevski has enshrined the peculiar flavour of the Flaubert art. Many interesting illustrations come from V. Lebedev, that master of drawings for children.

Most attractive is the children's Calendar, a publication contributed by thirty artists.

MUSIC

Russian Piano Music

The first classics of the Russian school of music such as Glinka and his followers composed a good deal for the pianoforte. Although Glinka's heritage of piano music consists of only a few pieces, they are original, profoundly national in spirit and breathe real poetry.

Mussorgsky also wrote few compositions for the piano. However, his *Pictures From the Exhibition* were new and daring for his day. Borodin's *Little Suite* with its fine pattern, and the colourful and original *Islamey* by Balakirev which incidentally was one of Liszt's favourites, rank alongside Mussorgsky's *Pictures.*

The outstanding creation of nineteenth century Russian pianoforte music is undoubtedly Chaikovsky's first concerto. The outward modesty of Chaikovsky's pianoforte pieces conceals profound emotion and true poesie. They breathe the spirit of Russian folk song and Russian nature.

Towards the end of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century, Russian composers had more frequent recourse to piano music.

Compositions by Glazunov, and delicate miniatures by Lyadov were written during this period. Three new names appeared somewhat later: Rachmaninov, Scriabin and Metner. None of them restricted themselves to the sphere of pianoforte music, but all three trusted the piano with their deepest and most significant thoughts.

Prokofyev made his entry into Russian music as a daring innovator. His pianoforte compositions are a link between the Russian classics and the works of the modern Soviet composers. Two pianoforte sonatas by Prokofyev have been awarded the Stalin Prize.

The senior representatives of Soviet pianoforte composition are Myaskovsky, author of monumental sonatas and poetic miniatures, Anatoli Alexandrov, the romantic, and Samuil Feinberg, one of Scriabin's most interesting disciples. Feinberg's recent big composition for the piano, his Second Concerto, was also awarded a Stalin Prize.

Many new names in the sphere of pianoforte music made their appearance in the post-revolutionary years.

Shostakovich produced several piano compositions, outstanding among which is the second sonata, an example of his deeply significant, severe and even somewhat ascetic lyrical compositions.

Aram Khachaturyan's piano concerto is colourful and temperamental, in the best Russian classical tradition and that of Oriental art.

Dmitri Kabalevsky's buoyant, light, softly lyrical talent is revealed in many of his pianoforte compositions. Particularly prominent among these are his recent 24 preludes, based on Russian folk melodies.

The program of the Concert Series *Russian Piano Music*, which recently had such great success in Moscow, included only a part of the compositions from the treasury of piano works by Russian composers. Heinrich Neygaus played compositions by Scriabin, Metner and Stravinsky, two pieces by Prokofyev from the music for *Hamlet*, Rachmaninov's and Prokofyev's sonatas and ballads.

Special concerts were devoted to Scriabin's piano compositions (pianist Vladimir Sofronitsky), to Chaikovsky (pianist Yuri Bryushkov), to Rachmaninov (pianist Isaak Mikhnovsky), and to Prokofyev (pianist Svyatoslav Richter). Shostakovich himself played his 12 preludes and second sonata. Jakov Flier acquainted the audience with a new prelude by Dmitri Kabalevsky.

Palace of Music

Shortly before the war a new concert hall named in honour of Chaikovsky was built in Moscow. This hall is a veritable palace of music, there is a performance every evening.

The entrance doors behind ten massive columns lead to a spacious vestibule, adorned with crystal lamps that resemble giant translucent flowers.

Below is a circular hall where everything is dedicated to Chaikovsky. Plaques and tablets record the scenic biography of his compositions. There are some rare photographs, such as *Eugene Onegin* on the old Petersburg stage and the first Moscow performances

The Chaikovsky Concert Hall

by Leonid Sobinov, unsurpassed in the role of Lensky.

A model represents an exact copy of Chaikovsky's work-room at Klin, near Moscow. In this quiet cosy room the composer worked, read and talked with his friends. Loving hands have collected for this small museum interesting data, depicting Chaikovsky's creative life.

But this is merely a prelude to the concert hall. The gleaming white marble walls, combined with the white velvet draperies, the heavy folds of the white backdrop, and the white chairs lend a festive air and ethereal lightness to this massive edifice. The graceful hall is crowned by the glass trellis of the ceiling, which reflects sunlight in the daytime and sends out a stream of artificial light, multicoloured when desired, at evening.

The hall was designed by Dmitri Chechulin, Moscow City architect.

During the five years since its opening, the Chaikovsky Hall has witnessed over 1,500 concerts, attended by an audience of over two million.

During the war the doors of the hall never closed. A-A guns roared over Moscow, sirens sounded the alert, but singers still came onto the stage, heated by portable stoves, musicians took their places in the orchestra, conductor lifted his baton, and immortal symphonies sounded in the hushed hall. . . .

In Chaikovsky Hall one can hear concerts of musical classics, national music, and works by modern composers. Everything that is best in the art of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. is heard here. The best symphony orchestras of the country, the popular Russian choir named after its founder, Piatnitsky, dancers of the Folk Ensemble, headed by Igor Moiseyev, and the Red Army Ensemble of Song and Dance directed by Alexander Alexandrov perform on the huge platform.

This year on Victory Day folk singers and bards, who arrived in Moscow specially for the V-day celebrations, performed in the Hall. They included collective farmers from Moscow Region, women tellers of folk tales from remote Northern villages, minstrels from sunny Azerbaijan, and the Yakut national poet Ustin Nakhsorov, a man who knows about half a million lines by heart.

Women Conductors

Tradition has accustomed us to the idea of seeing man wielding the conductor's baton. The general impression is that a strong masculine hand is needed to master the powerful elements of music, the manifold world o musical instruments, ranging from the clums contrabass to the capricious flute. . . .

Soviet women-conductors, however, hav invaded this masculine domain. Here is th story of two of them.

Twenty years ago the pianist Elena Senke vich first approached the conductor's desk A pupil of the well-known Russian pianis Esipova, she did not decide to become conductor overnight. It was Glazunov wh first divined her talent for conducting. Bu the young pianist was deterred by the though that conducting was not a feminine professio

However, after prolonged meditation Elen Senkevich, who already possessed concert an teaching experience, entered the conductor class of the Odessa Musical Institut Among the future conductors she was the so representative of her sex. Her fellow pupi regarded her with respect tinged with curios ty. But she was an even greater surprise t audiences when they saw that the conductor dais in the Odessa Opera House was occu pied by a woman.

Since then Elena Senkevich has succes fully conducted in opera houses in Pern Astrakhan, and Odessa. She has devoted th last fifteen years to radio work. Music excerpts from classical operas such as *Ru lan and Lyudmila. The Merry Wives of Win sor, Tosca, Madame Butterfly*, etc., are broa cast under her direction.

Elena Senkevich conducts most of th operas from memory, without a score.

In the autumn of 1941, when the Germa were at the gates of Moscow, the young co ductor Vera Rode, graduate of the Mosco Conservatory, volunteered for the Red Arm She was commissioned to form a militar band for the Guards' division in which sh served. This was the first time in the histo of Russian military music that a woman becam bandmaster. There were many excellent da cers and singers in the division, and lat Vera Rode organized and headed a So and Dance ensemble.

In the course of the battle for Moscow t division won its guards' laurels. And t young black-eyed woman had a guard badge pinned to her uniform. Together wi the division Vera Rode travelled the pa of battle all the way from Moscow to Koeni berg.

Now that the war is over, she appears the conductor's desk in evening dress, weari several military orders, an honourable minder of her battle merits.

Editor-in-chief: ALEXANDER KARAGANOV

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